CALLISTUS;

OR, THE

MAN OF FASHION.

AND

SOPHRONIUS;

OR, THE

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

IN

THREE DIALOGUES.

By THOMAS MULSO, Esq;

Monstro quod ipse tibi possis dare: Semita certè
Tranquillæ per virtutem patet unica vitæ.
JUVENAL, Sat. 10.

Namque animus impurus, Diis hominibusque infestus, neque vigiliis, neque quietibus sedari poterat; ita conscientia mentem excitam vexabat.
C. C. SALLUST. Bell. Catilin.

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MDCCLXVIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM
30
45
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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE LORD LYTTELTON,

One of the LORDS of his MAJESTY'S

Most Honourable PRIVY COUNCIL.

My LORD,

MANY years have elapsed since your Lordship did me the honour to peruse some of my Dialogues, and to approve them in terms which, if I had not known the excess of your candour and good nature, I should have supposed infallible proofs of their having some merit: your Lordship then thought they might do some good. — To do all the good I can to my fellow-creatures I ardently desire: — but your Lordship, who so long kept all Europe in impatient expectation of your admir-

able

able History of King Henry II. and who took ſuch unwearied pains to make it perfect, will not wonder at this delay in one unknown to the world, and with no other recommendation to its favour, than the benevolence of his intention in making this effort: ſuch as it is, I believe the *motive* will induce your Lordſhip's goodneſs to patronize it; and to indulge me in this public opportunity of having the honour to profeſs myſelf,—with the ſincereſt reſpect for the excellence of your character, and the higheſt admiration of your noble talents,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's

moſt obliged,

moſt obedient,

and moſt humble ſervant,

Rathbone-Place,
Feb. 17, 1768.

THOMAS MULSO.

TO THE

READER.

INSTEAD of troubling you with a Preface, I will only beg leave to borrow part of the Apology of an admirable Writer, who certainly ſtood in no need of it himſelf.

"THE ſame truths may be placed in various views; and amongſt men whoſe taſte and fancy differ ſo widely, an argument ſhall ſeem perſuaſive, and a remark pertinent to one, which by another is ſlighted and rejected. . . . .

"THE underſtandings of men are as the chords of muſical inſtruments: when a ſtring ſounds, the ſtrings which are uniſons to it, if within proper diſtance, will vibrate. None then ought to be diſcouraged, though his abilities be no

"more

" more than common, from appearing in
" defence of truths in which all are in-
" tereſted.....

" SHALL I add yet farther, that ſuch
" perſons deſerve ſomething beyond a bare
" permiſſion to utter their thoughts? When
" the intention ſeems upright, and the end
" propoſed is to make men better and
" wiſer, what is not ill executed, ſhould
" be received with approbation, with good
" words and good wiſhes, and ſmall faults
" and inadvertencies ſhould be candidly
" excuſed."

JORTIN's *Preface to Diſcourſes concerning the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion.*

CALLISTUS;

OR, THE

MAN OF FASHION,

DIALOGUE I.

——— Rubet auditor, cui frigida mens eſt
Criminibus, tacitâ ſudant præcordia culpâ.

JUVENAL. SAT. I.

DIALOGUE I

DIALOGUE I.

CALLISTUS. SOPHRONIUS.

INTRODUCTION.

TWO young gentlemen whom we will call CALLISTUS and SOPHRONIUS were fellow-collegiates at the University; where, though their diſpoſitions and characters were not very ſimilar, they ſoon appeared ſo agreeable to each other, that a ſhort intimacy produced thoſe cordial ſentiments of friendſhip which young minds are eager to indulge.

IT was no wonder that SOPHRONIUS was charmed with CALLISTUS, for he ſeemed to have been formed by nature

to engage all hearts: his perſon was beautiful, his carriage graceful, his manners gentle and obliging, his temper ſprightly; which with a great deal of wit, rarely at variance with a great deal of good nature, made his converſation univerſally admired.

SOPHRONIUS had nothing about him ſtriking; his perſon was agreeable but not handſome, his manner plain and ſimple, his underſtanding ſolid, but not ſhining, his temper eaſy and chearful, but not gay; in every thing he ſaid and did, he was ſure to be approved, though ſeldom applauded: the conſciouſneſs of his own worth inclined him to think advantageouſly of CALLISTUS's heart for the affection it had entertained for him: CALLISTUS indeed proved that with all his vivacity he wanted not judgment, by diſtinguiſhing SOPHRONIUS from all his acquaintance, amongſt whom there was none who had ſo juſt a title to his eſteem.

FOUR years were our young friends much the happier, and better, for their reciprocal affection; for the ſprightlineſs of CALLISTUS enlivened the ſerious diſpoſition of SOPHRONIUS; whilſt the gravity of the latter ſerved to keep that ſprightlineſs within proper bounds.

CALLISTUS was the heir of a family of high rank and fortune; and his father died about this time, contented with the hopes, his ſon's behaviour gave him reaſon to indulge, that he would make a proper uſe of the large eſtate he was going to leave him.

THIS melancholy event ſeparated the two friends; but they comforted themſelves with the proſpect of meeting again at LONDON in the winter, whither SOPHRONIUS was ſoon to repair, in order to proſecute his ſtudies in a profeſſion which his father's ſucceſsful induſtry recommended to him.

CALLISTUS has now six thousand pounds a year entirely at his own disposal; and SOPHRONIUS is settled in the TEMPLE; from whence he is often hurried by CALLISTUS, who could not enjoy those amusements to which his fortune, his youth, and the fashion of the times invited him, without a participation with his dear SOPHRONIUS.

THUS passed another year; by which time, SOPHRONIUS, whose appetite for pleasure was not very violent, was almost surfeited with it, when *his* father also died. He now found himself possessed of five hundred pounds a year, and as his desires were moderate, and his inclination led him to other studies, he determined to decline the profession of the law, and enjoy the leisure and retirement of a country life, to which his genius strongly inclined him.

ONCE more our friends muſt part; but they parted not with the ſame ſevere regret as before: CALLISTUS had now found out many ingenious arts to conſole himſelf for the loſs of a ſingle friend; and SOPHRONIUS could collect ſeveral conſiderations to induce him to bear the being torn from his ſociety, with ſome degree of patience; notwithſtanding which, he took a ſad, and ſolemn leave of CALLISTUS. Alas! it was a long, a laſt farewel to *his* CALLISTUS, to that amiable and innocent CALLISTUS whom he had loved at College. Riches, pleaſures, admiration, flattery, faſhion, and the contagion of that ſort of ſociety which his preſent ſituation had thrown him into, by degrees got the better of education, conviction, and that ſenſe, that love of virtue, which had formerly warmed his heart with the greateſt of delights, with ſelf-ſatisfaction; and he was now metamorphoſed from the agreeable, the amiable, the worthy CALLISTUS to—*the Man of*

Faſhion. Time and accident ſometimes threw his friend in his way; but he ſaw him not now with that joy and exultation with which he uſed to meet him: conſcious that he no longer could demand his eſteem, the ſight of SOPHRONIUS ſeemed only to reproach him with what he *had* been, and what he ought to be; ſo that his pride ſoon taught him to avoid as much as poſſible that mortification.

SOPHRONIUS obſerved with extreme concern, both the cauſe, and effect; he had endeavoured to remedy the one, by ſtriking at the other; but he ſoon found it impoſſible for his ſingle ſtrength to reſcue his unhappy friend from the torrent which hurried him away: he retired therefore with the greateſt indignation and averſion from a ſcene of luxury and debauchery, which he looked upon as the bane of friendſhip and of virtue.

MANY years had now paſſed away, during which SOPHRONIUS had had little

or

or no communication with CALLISTUS, when one day he was surprized with a letter, delivered by a servant, in his livery.

THE LETTER WAS AS FOLLOWS:

My dear friend,

INDULGE me in the pleasure of calling you so, though I have no right to expect that you will answer to that appellation—And yet suffer me to act in this one instance as if I thought I had; it is the last time I shall offend so much against modesty and you, as to demand a favour of you. Hasten to the relief of one who expects you with all the eagerness of a dying man, who has no other comfort left to hope.

Once more I will subscribe myself,

with the most perfect esteem,

most affectionately your

CALLISTUS.

P. S. To ſhew you the confidence I have in your goodneſs, I have ſent a carriage to convey you to me.

SOPHRONIUS immediately prepared to depart. On his arrival, he found his friend pale and emaciated, with a countenance, the picture of ſorrow and deſpair: the ſad ſight revived all the tenderneſs of SOPHRONIUS, and he flew to his embrace with all the ardour of affection he had ever felt for him. They continued locked in each others arms, too much moved to ſpeak, until SOPHRONIUS felt CALLISTUS ſinking from him: he immediately conveyed him to the eaſy chair from whence he was juſt riſen, and placed himſelf by him.

CALLISTUS ſoon recovered his ſhattered ſpirits, when looking on his friend with anguiſh in his eyes, he dropped his head, and ſmote his breaſt — but preſently looking

ing up, with a forced ſmile, he ſpoke as follows:

CALLISTUS.

AND are you come my dear good friend?—What a wretch am I who cannot enjoy this great pleaſure without ſo many painful reflections!

SOPHRONIUS.

DEAR CALLISTUS, uſe me as your friend; do not give ſo much pain to one whoſe earneſt wiſh is to give you pleaſure.

CALLISTUS.

WELL—believe me I am much rejoiced to ſee you look ſo well. And how does the amiable URANIA and your children? How many have you? are they all healthy and good?—I am aſhamed to aſk what I long to know.

SOPHRONIUS.

I THANK you, dear Sir, we are all well, we live in a good country, the beauty

ty of which tempts us to use exercise, this carries us into the air, and these with our plain way of living, in general insure to us a good state of health.——But my dear Sir, what is it that has made this alteration in you?

CALLISTUS.

What comforts do you enjoy, which I can never taste! here am I left in the condition you see, to the care of servants who have no real concern for me; or at best, to that of relations who are too much interested in my death to be sincere and cordial in their endeavours to preserve my life.

SOPHRONIUS.

Well, dear Callistus, you shall no longer complain for want of a tender nurse; if you will accept my best endeavours to take care of, and comfort you, be assured I will not leave you till I see you recovered.

Cal-

CALLISTUS.

O good SOPHRONIUS, think not I would detain you from URANIA and your family—Alas, thoſe friendly offices are now too late!—the dreadful ſentence is paſt, and I expect every hour to ſuffer the execution—But—oh! with what horrors do I expect it!—Teach me, SOPHRONIUS, to think of death with patience! teach me to expect it without ſuch an agony! This is the ſervice I entreat,—not from your friendſhip, for I have forfeited all right to that,—but from your goodneſs, your charity!

SOPHRONIUS.

GOOD GOD! how you ſhock me! believe me, dear Sir, you may demand every thing from my friendſhip.—But why do you think with ſuch deſpondence? What is this diſtemper—what is this ſubtle foe which you think can elude the ſkill of your phyſicians, and the care of

your

your friend! think better of us, Sir, think better of yourself!

CALLISTUS.

Alas! my phyſicians have already abandoned me, and all that my friend can do, is to flatter me, and even in that he will fail of ſucceſs — O Sir, imagine what my condition muſt be, when even that powerful medicine fails! — My friends had flattered me out of my ſenſes; — but my phyſicians have now reſtored them.

SOPHRONIUS,

(*in a low voice, but overhear'd.*)

Alas! I fear not!

CALLISTUS.

What ſays my friend? — O that I could *hope*, what I ſee you *fear*—it would be happineſs to what I feel! — O no Sir, —it is my reaſon reſtored, my cool ſounder judgment which tells me I muſt die —Die! ah no! muſt live — a miſerable eternity!

eternity! O horrible! ſpeak to me my friend! now flatter me if you can!

SOPHRONIUS.

GREAT GOD! what means my friend? confirm my ſuſpicions, or account for this ſhocking change! — Who is it that dares pronounce that ſentence? Who is it that can, but He, that great good Being, who is all mercy and benevolence, who conſiders the imperfections of our nature, and can look on our failings with compaſſion and forgiveneſs!

CALLISTUS.

O SIR, you do nothing: is this all the comfort you can give me? can you flatter me no better than this? You ſhould have told me there was no judge in heaven—no account to be given—no retribution to be made—nay, no hereafter—Theſe are the cordials I have been uſed to, and think you leſs will raiſe me? —

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS.

No, CALLISTUS, I know you better; I know your education and principles, too deeply rooted ever to be eradicated; I know your good ſenſe too well to doubt of your belief of all theſe things; nor can I fear ſuch deſperate remedies are wanting; you are too ſevere upon yourſelf; that Judge to whom we muſt account for our failings, will conſider our temptations; your form, your fortune, and ſituation in life muſt have expoſed you to many and great ones; and though we are undoubtedly capable of reſiſting them, (or elſe it would not be required) which of us, in reality, does not often yield to them? and muſt we then all periſh everlaſtingly? you cannot ſuppoſe it.

CALLISTUS.

AH Sir! you judge of me by yourſelf, and whilſt you intend to comfort, you join in condemning me; you talk of

failings,

failings, to which the beſt of us are liable, from which there never lived the man who was entirely exempt; but alas! you come not near my caſe:—crimes, ſins, wickedneſs, and villainy, are here the ſubjects you muſt treat of: you muſt forget that he whom you are to think of, was once worthy to be called the friend of SOPHRONIUS, or you will never be able to comprehend the turpitude, the miſery of my caſe.

SOPHRONIUS.

DEAREST CALLISTUS, do not exalt me thus, by debaſing yourſelf: you forget the difference of the trials we have been expoſed to, the difficulties you have had to encounter, and the favourable circumſtances which would have made any great failure on my part unpardonable: it pleaſed heaven to fix my eaſy ſtation in the humble vale of life, ſecluded from thoſe incitements to vice to which your lofty ſituation muſt expoſe you; to be content,

was

was almoſt all my taſk; and it would have been the heighth of ingratitude and folly not to have been ſo, bleſt as I have been, in all the important circumſtances of life. How much more difficult has been your part! Believe me, my friend, ſix thouſand pounds a year, and five hundred, is a difference of great importance, when the merit of our behaviour is to be weighed in an equal balance, and our temptations to be poiſed againſt our failings.

CALLISTUS.

HAPPY ſituation! O bleſt retirement! nurſery of virtue! where only peace of mind and calm contentment are to be found!—But what is all this! mark how I am flattering myſelf, and injuring you!—but I will mend it. O happy friend! ſuperlative bliſs! the fruits of virtue! A quiet conſcience, peace within, order and chearfulneſs all around you! O happy, becauſe worthy SOPHRONIUS!

who

who have cherished those good inclinations which heaven blessed your nature with, who have diligently cultivated those seeds of virtue and religion, which a good education implanted in your youthful mind; who have with steady resolution fashioned all your actions according to those principles; and who have been therefore blessed by the natural consequences, with health of body, peace of mind, the esteem, respect, admiration, and affection of all who are any way connected with you. Whilst I ——

SOPHRONIUS.

WHO has been more esteemed, admired and beloved than the amiable CALLISTUS? Believe me, Sir, I never knew any one, of a rank and fortune so exposed to the envy and malignity of mankind, more happy in these respects.

CALLISTUS.

I HAVE indeed met with much of those outward regards, which, when justly ap-

plied, muſt be gratifying; but, with a conſciouſneſs of unworthineſs, they are humiliations. But what are the applauſes of the many, who are no judges of our merit? they found me honeſt in my dealings betwixt man and man; they found me not niggardly of the good things heaven has ſo largely bleſſed me with—ſhall I ſay bleſſed!—O yes—'tis I who have perverted them!——They found me not ill-humoured, or ill-bred, and were therefore ready enough to grant me worth, to which I have not the leaſt pretenſions. Sir, hear me out patiently, whilſt I confeſs myſelf before heaven and you, and then you will no longer wound me with your indulgences.

You may remember, that when firſt you knew me, in thoſe happy days which we ſpent together at college! thoſe days of innocence, of real chearfulneſs, and joy of heart—let me interrupt myſelf a little to indulge the pleaſing recol-

lection! —delightful dream! would thou couldſt be recalled! I was the darling of the college; every one admired, praiſed, and courted me; SOPHRONIUS loved me; and I deſerved his love.—And what am I now! —See here this minion! See this wretch! worn out with ſickneſs, overwhelmed with ſorrow, loaded with guilt, ſurrounded with horrors; puſh'd forward every moment to the brink of deſtruction—I ſee it—I feel it—I ſhudder—I tremble—but I muſt go on—I cannot live; and oh! —how I dread to die!

SOPHRONIUS.

O CALLISTUS, do not torture me thus!

CALLISTUS.

WELL —I will purſue the cruel taſk, I have impoſed upon myſelf, and you. In thoſe happy days, I was—but why ſhould I tell you what I was, who knew it well,

for I was then ſincere and artleſs; I was all that I appeared to be.

SOPHRONIUS.

THEN you was the moſt amiable of men: with the livelieſt gaiety, free from levity; your generoſity ran not into extravagance; your humanity ſunk not into weakneſs; your ſpirit ſwelled not into preſumption and inſolence; you was free in your way of thinking, without being ſceptical; ſerious in your duties, without being ſuperſtitious; in ſhort, you was deſervedly eſteemed, beloved and admired by all, and yet preſerved a modeſty in your deportment, rarely met with, in ſuch circumſtances, at your age.

CALLISTUS.

CRUEL, cruel SOPHRONIUS! — but I beg your pardon; you meant not to upbraid me: O how is it poſſible that being what I then was, I ſhould ever have become

come what I have ſince been! that I ſhould be the wretch I am! — it is aſtoniſhing! — you will not believe me! — O that I could recal that time! — that I could live over my days again! — Execrable wretch, art thou that CALLISTUS! — O that I could live but one year more! — but one poor month! Great God! I ſhall be ſnatched away before I have told it! now — now — I am going! — oh! — I am gone — without a hope —

SOPHRONIUS.

Good heaven! his ſpirits fail him — he faints — CALLISTUS! — oh — he is quite gone! — my friend! CALLISTUS!

CALLISTUS.

HAE! who calls me? what's the matter? — where am I? — who are you, Sir? — SOPHRONIUS? — is it you? I have been ill I believe — be ſo good to give me ſome of that cordial — Thank you, good Sir — I am better.

SOPHRONIUS.

THANK GOD!

CALLISTUS.

SIT down my friend —— I am much better ——

SOPHRONIUS.

I AM glad of it!

CALLISTUS.

Now do not interrupt me 'till I have told my ſhocking tale; then hold me, ſave me, 'till you have found ſome comfort for me, 'till you have given me ſome glimpſe of hope.

SOPHRONIUS.

SOME other time, dear Sir; do not harraſs yourſelf juſt now.

CALLISTUS.

HUSH! Where ſhall I begin? by what ſteps ſhall I lead you to the utmoſt horror?

ror? O fatal calamity, to loſe one's parents at ſuch an age! to be left without controul, with ſuch opportunities, in ſuch a world! to be maſter of ſuch a fortune, at two and twenty! I came from college, innocent; I came to this town without a bad inclination; I went to the diverſions of it with a blameleſs curioſity; I dreſt myſelf richly becauſe I ſaw my acquaintance do ſo. From the calmneſs of a college life, I found myſelf in a perpetual crowd and hurry, but it was a hurry of amuſements, a crowd of admirers; I found myſelf flattered by the men, and careſſed by the women; I felt myſelf ſoftned; I grew pleaſed with their company; I found not that good ſenſe and ingenuity, that feaſt of ſoul, which I was uſed to in the ſociety of my SOPHRONIUS and ſome other friends at Oxford, but I found ſomething which made me not regret the loſs of it: I could bear the frank praiſes of my old companions, without feeling my heart the worſe for them, but a compliment on my per-

ſon, from a ſilly woman, filled me with unmanly pride; I became more curious in my dreſs; I found a new pleaſure at the theatre independent of the ſtage; I felt a new rapture at the opera independent of the muſic; I met fine eyes that ſeemed to look at me with pleaſure; I found fine women more inclined to hearken to my wit than to that of Shakeſpear; and though the inſtance proved their want of judgment, I was delighted with the flattery. This fatal vanity was the ſource of all my miſery! There was a time, you know, when I took pleaſure in books, but now I ſoon found myſelf diſſatisfied with them; books would not flatter me, and I loſt all taſte for any other enjoyment;—and oh! to what mean arts did my inſatiable appetite for praiſe, force me to condeſcend! to ſatisfy it, I daily ſacrificed my judgment, my humanity, and my conſcience! I *muſt* be admired, and in order to it, I muſt be all that the fools of the gay world admire, and nothing

thing which they do not applaud: to be religious, is to be ridiculed and derided, — I muſt therefore no longer be religious: here, my dear parents, was the pious work of two and twenty years, at once demoliſhed! Here, great God, were all the ſeeds of virtue which thou wert pleaſed to implant in my nature, ſtifled and trampled on by vanity! — not altogether ſtifled — for now they are revived, to torture me to madneſs! — not to be extravagant, was not to be faſhionable, I was therefore extravagant; not to game, is not to be a ſocial creature, and not to game high with the reputation of my fortune, was not to have ſpirit, I muſt therefore game high; I won; I was prouder of this fleeting acquiſition, than of all my legal poſſeſſions: a new paſſion ſeized my ſoul, I was greedy of this gain; — I loſt — I was diſappointed; I was mortified; I was inraged; — I was torn by contending paſſions.

But

BUT the perfection, the very eſſence of a man of pleaſure, is gallantry. Do you know what I mean by gallantry, SOPHRONIUS?

SOPHRONIUS.

O SIR, I have not lived ſo much out of the gay world, as not to have ſome idea of it — Go on, CALLISTUS, if you have any more to tell, and keep me not on the rack.

CALLISTUS.

ALAS, SOPHRONIUS, talk not of racks already — why, Sir, this is only preparation; I am hardly yet initiated in vice; but if it ſhocks you, dear Sir, I muſt break off here, and die without this penance.

SOPHRONIUS.

O NO, go on — it is a neceſſary leſſon of humiliation! — who ſhall be confident, if CALLISTUS is fallen? who ſhall be praiſed 'till the end, if CALLISTUS is become reprobate?

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

WHY, Sir, all this I did in order to be praiſed; and I ſucceeded to my wiſh: I found myſelf more and more careſſed by the men, more and more admired by the women; I found a preference in my favour, amongſt all I converſed with.

I BEGAN now to think of reaping ſome more ſubſtantial fruits of my power and my fortune; for though vanity was at firſt the predominant paſſion, I ſoon felt new wiſhes craving to be ſatisfied; and from the ſucceſs of my firſt adventures, with my obſervation of the behaviour of women in general, I began to conceive a very mean opinion of the ſex; to believe that they were capable of giving a man of ſenſe no higher gratifications than thoſe I had experienced; and to reſolve to apply them to the only purpoſes I ſuppoſed they were made to anſwer: ſucceſs increaſed my boldneſs, and for a long time

I puſhed

I puſhed my fortune with equal facility and rapidity; till at laſt unlimited indulgence palled my appetite, and there ſeemed to want more wickedneſs to give a zeſt to my pleaſures. — Do you know me, SOPHRONIUS? Do you ſtill acknowledge me for your CALLISTUS?

SOPHRONIUS.

INDEED, Sir, I can hardly diſcover CALLISTUS through this cloud of error; but I live in hopes to ſee you break thro' it, and recover, if poſſible, your former luſtre.

CALLISTUS.

O NO, Sir, you will ſoon be no longer able to diſcover any traces of your friend: hitherto I am ſtill a man; in the common caſe of young men with violent paſſions, ſtrong temptations, and great opportunities; charity might find out ſome mitigation of my faults; flattery might ſay that I was excuſable, if not blameleſs: that

that with regard to my gaming, it was a genteel and innocent amuſement; that the univerſal cuſtom of the world, to which every man who lives in it ought to ſubmit, entirely juſtified it; that as to extravagance, I was guilty of none; that it would be pitiful, nay, almoſt criminal, in a man of my fortune and expectations, to be leſs expenſive; and then for my gallantries, that youth is the ſeaſon for love; that in the firſt of my amours I was rather the ſeduced than the ſeducer; and the following inſtances, conſidering the circumſtances, ought by no means to be called ſeductions, but rather, mutual, free, and equal engagements for the advancement of each other's pleaſure.

Thus I could formerly flatter myſelf; but the deceit can no longer ſucceed; ſickneſs will at once diſcover all ſophiſtry of this kind; this has convinced me beyond the power of diſputing, that all the time I ſpent in gaming was worſe than loſt

loſt; — that it directly tends to break the equal temper of our minds; the very eſſence of our pleaſure in it, conſiſting in rouſing and irritating thoſe paſſions which it ought to be the buſineſs of our lives to pacify and ſubdue; that extravagance (by which I mean ſpending more than my income) with ſo large an income was inexcuſable; that my expences ſhewed the heighth of falſe taſte; that inſtead of purchaſing the exquiſite joys of ſnatching the needy wretch from the fangs of famine, and renewing ſmiles in every face of anguiſh around me, I have diſſipated my ſuperfluous wealth in the groſs and trivial enjoyments of luxury and ſenſuality; — or rather in the effeminate gratifications of pride and vanity; for theſe were, in truth, the chief ſprings even of my ſenſual extravagancies; — theſe abſurd paſſions! O how abſurd in a wretch like me! in a creature, who is every hour liable to become the poor wretch that I am! — O fool, fool! — where are now

the foundations of thy vanity? what haſt thou now to give a colour to thy pride? —— is this the face which drew all eyes upon it? are theſe the eyes that uſed to look ſo gaily and ſo confidently around in ſearch of admiration? —— O pale, haggard countenance, ye hollow, heavy, dead eyes, ye white, trembling lips, thou ſallow, livid ſkin, would ye had ever been ſo! and O poor ſtrengthleſs, ſhapeleſs legs, upon which I have ſo often danced with triumphant, inſolent conceit, — that ye had been twiſted in the womb! —— Wretch, wretch! what art thou now? where are thy poſſeſſions, thy tenants, and dependants! Call them all around thee; bid them defend thee againſt inſulting death! bid them ſtand betwixt thee and the throne of juſtice! — What ſhall I ſay? what ſhall I do! — I cannot *then* die again! O that I were nothing! that I had never been! — O SOPHRONIUS, how can I think of ſeeing my Almighty Judge! cover me, ye mountains! — cruſh

me

me Worlds! — SOPHRONIUS, ſave me — there they are! look how ſadly wild ſhe looks! — ſee how ſhe ſhakes her head, and points to her brother — Ay, it was I, miſerable wretch that I am! — ſweet angel, look not ſo piteouſly on me! — Oh, killing, killing! — hark! her mother raves, and howls in raging madneſs! — how furiouſly ſhe ſtares! — ſee, ſhe ruſhes towards me! —

SOPHRONIUS.

SIR, what mean you? whom do you ſpeak to? what do you look at?

CALLISTUS.

DON'T you ſee them? look—he draws his ſword! — let him come! — come, injured youth, plunge thy revengeful weapon deep into my heart! and — wouldſt thou be merciful — kill my ſoul! ——

SOPHRONIUS.

GOOD GOD! —CALLISTUS! why, dear CALLISTUS, recollect yourſelf! what is the matter, Sir?

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

NOTHING — I beg your pardon — O come nearer me, dear Sir; — who can bear this! — it conſumes me — it deſtroys me: — I am ſorry I ſent for you, Sir; — I am very faint and weak — ſee here (*meaning tears*) they will have their way — I cannot keep them back —— do not deſpiſe me, good SOPHRONIUS — my ſpirits are quite exhauſted.

SOPHRONIUS.

YOU ſee I have no right: — let us not be aſhamed of being men! — believe me, my friend, — my heart bleeds for you! — good Sir, drink this.

[*Offering a cordial.*

CALLISTUS.

THANK you. — You are exceeding good: — God will reward you: —— You are *too* good: — you have not ſpurned me yet, — you called me *friend* juſt now; that's too much! I muſt not taſte of joy.

SOPHRONIUS.

Do not kill me!——

CALLISTUS.

Alas! how much does your grief add to my own! why ſhould I pain you thus? Leave me, my dear good friend; return to Urania and your children;—be happy;——and think no more of the wretch, Callistus.

SOPHRONIUS.

Unkind Callistus, to bid me be happy, and make me thus miſerable! Did you bid me leave you? O no, be aſſured I will not, cannot leave you, whilſt I ſee you thus.

CALLISTUS.

O ever humane, generous, Sophronius!—but I will not thank you.—I am better now; come, my dear friend, look up; we have no more time for tears: if

—if you can have the patience, you have much more to hear.

SOPHRONIUS.

O no,—ſome other time;—ſpare yourſelf and me;—you muſt have reſpite;—another time I'll hear it all;—and I have much to ſay to you;—tidings of comfort, I hope, to bring you;—but now—I cannot ſpeak.

CALLISTUS.

Ah, Sir, there is no choice of time for me! And my kind phyſician, it is in vain to preſcribe a remedy, 'till you know the whole of the caſe; alas! I fear you will find mine beyond the reach of your healing art! But I beg of your goodneſs and charity to hear me out with patience.

Where did I leave off? — I think I was ſpeaking of gallantry: aſtoniſhing aſſurance! ſo to term the debauching innocent minds, the enticing and betraying

them into guilt, and deſtroying the peace of families, — I ſay the qualifying theſe villanies with the ſpecious term of *gallantries*, and ſpeaking of them as indifferent amuſements, is ſuch a ſtretch of impudence and abſurdity, as it is wonderful ſhould be ſuffered: and yet this I did myſelf, and endured in others: and, as if I had not yet ſufficiently broke thro' all the rules of decency and virtue, nor ſufficiently trampled on the rights and laws of ſociety, as if I was not already plunged too deep in ſin, I aſpired to the noble title of ADULTERER! ——

A GENTLEMAN, with whom I intimately converſed, at whoſe houſe I was often entertained, nay, whom I called my friend, had been ſome years married to a moſt amiable woman: he was a kind, tender huſband; ſhe was a virtuous and obliging wife; they were mutually bleſt in each other; 'till I, like the malignant fiend, envious of their Paradiſe,

radiſe, with baſe cunning, enticed the lovely Eve to her ruin; and for a moment's pleaſure to myſelf, deſtroyed all the happineſs and peace of both their lives! Now curſe me, SOPHRONIUS! — help me to curſe this ſelfiſh, perfidious, cruel villain! Where can you now find the ſhadow of an excuſe? this was no ſudden ſtart of paſſion! With half the time and pains it coſt me to ſubdue this ſtubborn virtue, I might have conquered my own paſſions: had all thoſe cares, that caution, vigilance, and aſſiduity to pleaſe, all thoſe adorations, humiliations, ſighs, and prayers, and tears, been offered up to God, I might have been a ſaint! I now became a perfect hypocrite: my perſon and converſation firſt caught her attention, but nothing could gain her eſteem but worth; alas, how little pretenſion had I then to it! and yet whilſt I *admired her* goodneſs, I endeavoured to abuſe and undermine it: I recollected all my former virtuous ſentiments, only to further

my preſent wicked purpoſe: whilſt I converſed with her, I was ſo charmed with her goodneſs, that ſometimes I could fancy that I too was good; I felt as if I was again CALLISTUS, *your* CALLISTUS: I loved her paſſionately, and I almoſt flattered myſelf, as well as her, that I loved her innocently: but oh! whilſt I would moſt readily have ſacrificed my own life for her ſafety, I was watching for an opportunity to ſacrifice her honour, her peace, and perfection, to my own gratification. What ſtrange contradictions! my eyes were again opened to the beauty of goodneſs; I was delighted, I was ſoftened by its heavenly charms; and I ſeemed to be both happier and better for theſe raptures of admiration; but it was *her* goodneſs that I admired; I again became in love with virtue, but it was in *her*; and in proportion as my eſteem for the beauties of her mind increaſed, my paſſion for her perſonal charms grew more violent; ſo

that

that as the one invited me to return to virtue, the other tempted and provoked me to perſiſt in vice: I ſaw plainly which was the beſt party, but had not reſolution to abandon the worſt. I was all war within: I was moſt miſerable! I was ſometimes ready to deſtroy myſelf, but I could not quell my paſſion — ha! art thou flattering thyſelf ſtill? I could not? — I *would* not — I never reſolutely attempted it; I was a vile ſlave to my ſenſual appetites; I felt the weight of my chains, they galled me, and I fretted under them, but I made no ſincere efforts to break them. I was continually harraſſed by remorſe, and yet I perſiſted in my impious courſe: my deſires could not have been more importunate, more uneaſy to me, than my conſcience, why then did I not obey the latter? Alas! becauſe, irreſolute as I was, the preſent object ſeized faſteſt on my attention; I could not reſolve to ſacrifice the bliſs I every day promiſed myſelf, to the doubtful, diſtant proſpect

of any other happineſs; doubtful it ſeemed to me, not that I then doubted that good men would be happy in a future ſtate, but that I doubted much my reſolution to be good: I had ſo long lived in a courſe of offences to heaven, that I was conſcious it could only be by a ſincere repentance, and a thorough reformation, that I could reconcile myſelf; and ſin was become ſo ſtrong a habit in me, that I feared I had loſt the power of reforming or repenting; however, I could not think of attempting it, 'till I had added this one ſin more to the black catalogue. What a ſtate!—O SOPHRONIUS, you know not what it is; the *miſeries* of the good, are happineſs to *our pleaſures!* Hope ſweetens their bittereſt potions; faith enlightens their gloomieſt proſpects; whilſt doubt perpetually diſtracts our minds; fear caſts a damp upon all our joys; and remorſe for ever gnaws our hearts. And what was my reward for all this toil of wickedneſs — theſe years of ſlavery to a

tyrant

tyrant paſſion! I had — but I will not vex your ears, nor have I life enough perhaps, to enter into a particular detail of the numberleſs ſchemes of villany, the little baſe arts of cunning, and the thouſand, thouſand minute circumſtances of watchful wickedneſs, by which I undermined the fondneſs of this faithful couple, tainted their imaginations with mutual doubts and diſpleaſures, unhinged their principles, corrupted their hearts, and utterly deſtroyed the happineſs of all the remainder of their lives — Oh! how is it poſſible I can be ſaved, when I condemn myſelf — I deteſt and abhor myſelf — and take delight in torturing myſelf — Why do not you aſſiſt me! have you loſt all ſenſe of injuries? have you no regard to juſtice? Come, come, Sir, tear my heart! rack me, torture me! — I do not feel enough! my heart is hardned! — whip me with iron-rods! ſcourge this cruel ſlave who delighted in miſchief — who wrung the heart of innocence! — O

that

that I could weep! — I burſt with bitter ſorrow! —

SOPHRONIUS.

GREAT GOD of heaven, and earth, have pity on him! look on his ſufferings, merciful Creator! accept his ſevere contrition!

CALLISTUS.

Amen—amen! — ay, now they guſh — are they not blood, SOPHRONIUS? — weep heart, as well as eyes! —— O thou ſupreme, thou righteous —— I dare not pray—Oh! how ſhould I lift up my eyes to him who knows my heart! baſe, cruel, ſelfiſh heart! — burſt — burſt! —

SOPHRONIUS.

WEEP on, poor CALLISTUS! thou muſt ſuffer! and heaven knows how much I ſuffer with thee! pour out thy contrite ſoul in penitential ſorrow; but in the midſt of thy deep diſtreſs, remember hope;

hope; for God, in the midſt of juſtice, will remember mercy.

CALLISTUS.

O, Sir, ſpeak on of ſorrow — bittereſt ſorrow, — diſtreſs, and unutterable anguiſh, but talk not yet of mercy, for alas! you will only flatter me; you know not yet half my guilt.

SOPHRONIUS.

— Good God, is there more to come? is there any thing worſe?

CALLISTUS.

Ay, Sir, there is, much more, and therefore worſe! I can ſpeak now, and will ſnatch the opportunity to go on.

After all this tedious preparation, after I had alienated her love from her huſband, and ſecured it to myſelf — ah, poor Lucinda, what a change! — After I had taken all theſe pains to work her

her to my purpoſe, I found myſelf ſtill unlikely to gain it; ſhe frankly confeſſed ſhe loved me, but ſtill ſtopped my mouth with indignation, whenever I attempted to inſinuate the completion of my wiſhes. Think how I raged with impatience and diſappointment — I began to fear that all my long laboured ſchemes would be fruſtrated; that after I had incurred all the guilt, I ſhould reap no fruit from it; when one night that my injured friend was out of town, I perſuaded her to go to the Maſquerade; there I exerted all my arts of pleaſing, of deluding, of corrupting; but, as I had long experienced the weakneſs of their power on this obſtinate virtue, I prevailed on her at different times, and by various arguments, to drink ſeveral glaſſes of Champaigne, which operated to my wiſh: her blood inflamed, her imagination heated, her mind ſoftned, and her conſcience lulled aſleep, I conveyed her to a place commodious for my purpoſe, and there,

like

like a baſe, cruel aſſaſſin, deſtroyed her virtue whilſt it ſlumbered: but, oh, SOPHRONIUS, with what terrors did it wake! all her guilt, like a hideous ſpectre, glared before her eyes; her ſoul was overcome with confuſion and terror; ſhe ſunk into a long ſwoon; — I knew not whether ſhe would ever recover from it; — a thouſand dreadful conſequences crowded to my imagination; — aſtoniſhment, compaſſion, fear, ſhame, remorſe and horror, ſhook my whole frame; —— my knees ſmote one againſt the other, a cold dew hung upon my forehead, and I would have given the whole world, to have recalled one hour. —— At length ſhe was reſtored —— to what? —— ſhall I ſay to life! Alas! ſhe has ever ſince been dying! — O, Sir! think what a mind, unuſed to wilful ſin, muſt feel, that finds itſelf ſuddenly plunged ſo deep in guilt! — but ſurely her ſorrow and contrition were ſtill deeper! —— For ſome time, ſhe ſeemed to be in a manner ſtupefied;

fied; a dreadful calm held her ſoul in ſuſpenſe; ſhe looked up at me with a peaceful, unthinking countenance; ſhe held out her beautiful hand to me, which mine trembled as it received; I ſtood in that ſtate of fearful expectation which thoſe unhappy mortals feel, who know, by a certain ſtillneſs of all nature, that an earthquake muſt ſucceed: ſhe looked round the room with an emotion of ſurprize, as not recollecting where ſhe was; then ſhe turned to me again, with meek enquiring eyes; — I could not ſpeak — my very ſoul was chilled, my tongue was frozen: I looked, I doubt not, like the guilty robber when brought before Juſtice to confront his accuſer:—She ſeemed to wonder at my countenance, and my ſilence, when ſudden recollection lighted up her eyes with all the rage of all the paſſions; —her brain ſeemed to boil with the heat of her imagination; her heart beat with aſtoniſhing fury; — now was the dreadful earthquake! her boſom

worked with violent convulſive heavings; I dreaded every moment her falling into more dangerous fits, for ſhe could not weep; ſo that I trembled, leſt the furious conflict within, finding no vent, ſhould ſuddenly deſtroy her: I threw myſelf at her feet, and with all the moving geſtures, tender looks, and ſoftening expreſſions I could deviſe, endeavoured to melt her into tears; I ſucceeded at laſt, and then had reaſon to fear that ſhe would have been ſtifled with the raging torrent: I believe it was an hour before ſhe was in any degree compoſed; in all which time ſhe never ſpoke three words, nor hardly looked on me; her eyes were ſometimes fixed upon the floor, and ſometimes caſt up to heaven, with a look of ſuch unutterable anguiſh, as wrung my heart. At laſt the fountain of her tears dried up, the ſtorm of paſſion ſubſided by degrees, and ſhe ſunk into a fixt thoughtfulneſs for ſome time; then, with an air of reſolution

lution and dignity, she desired me, in a manner which commanded my obedience, to find her some method of conveyance home: I put her into a chair, with the conscious meanness of a beaten slave, and she left me to enjoy my triumph. How I enjoyed it! I was distracted! — I feared from her manner, I had nothing further to expect, and yet my wishes were no less eager; — see how they were satisfied —— This was the assignation I received next day.

SIR,

THINK not I am going to reproach you; — no, I am sensible I have no right to do it: I am too deeply plunged in guilt myself, to presume to upbraid another; my only end in this, is to conjure you, as you are a gentleman, to be careful of my reputation; the loss of which only is wanting to complete my misery. I beseech you by —— your love, I was going

ing to ſay, but I have no reaſon to think *that* is any motive with you to do me good — and to adjure you by that ſacred power, which I have ſo lately offended, ſuits neither your condition, nor my own: — Alas! I have nothing left whereby to move you, but my deep diſtreſs! — by theſe tears then, by theſe ſcalding tears, which blot the writing, I implore you, let not any act or word of inconſideration, impatience, or reſentment eſcape you, that may give a ſuſpicion of our fatal ſecret, when I ſolemnly, and moſt reſolutely declare, as I hope for forgiveneſs of my paſt ſins, and particularly this laſt, great, foul one, that I never will repeat it. The remainder of my wretched days muſt be devoted to ſorrow and ſevere repentance; would to heaven you may be diſpoſed to dedicate your own to the ſame purpoſes! O that we may meet, through the mercy of God, hereafter, in a better ſtate, freed from that ſhame and confuſion which muſt for ever ac-

company the ſight of each other here! Spare me that mortification as much as poſſible, without making the ſudden interruption of our acquaintance remarkable.

How happy I have been! — it is all paſſed! — O peace and eaſe, O health of mind and body, O chearful innocence, farewel! —— Come and learn of me to ſigh and weep, but do not interrupt my ſolemn ſorrows —— do not diſturb the ſacred moments of a dying wretch; but, ſince you have utterly deſtroyed the happineſs of my preſent ſtate of exiſtence, help me to eſcape perfect miſery in the next, and pray for the deſolate

LUCINDA.

THIS was my reward! here was the tranſient heaven, to the attainment of which I had ſo long dedicated all my powers, changed in a moment to a perfect hell! Vexation, rage, and remorſe,

rent my ſoul! I imprecated vengeance on myſelf! Sometimes I curſed the world, and even poor LUCINDA — then, at the thought of her affliction, wept like a beaten child. O glorious ſtate! what comfort have the wicked? what had I to ſooth my anguiſh! Life was a cruel torment to me, and I dared not die! The grave could promiſe *me* no refuge from pain! I had no hope! — I have none now! now I *muſt* die —— down, down, thou curſed heart, and do not choak me! — I flattered myſelf I could fly from deſpair; I reſolved to change the ſcene, and go abroad. I went to LUCINDA to take my leave; I was told ſhe was ill, and confined to her bed: alas! ſhe has never been well ſince; her conſtitution, as well as her ſpirit, is broken: her huſband ſuſpects not the cauſe of all her miſeries, but is miſerable himſelf by ſympathy with her; for after my fatal deſign had diſcloſed itſelf, ſhe ſoon re-traced my wiles, penetrated the whole

ſcheme of my villany, and recovered her huſband's affection, by her redoubled tenderneſs, and attention to him. Since my return from abroad, I have heard that they live entirely in the country, where ſhe employs all her time and powers in acts of piety and charity; and though her health continually decays, has, in a great meaſure, recovered her ſerenity, and chearfulneſs of temper. O that I had acted like her! perhaps, inſtead of ſuffering thus, I too might now have ſmiled in peace!

SOPHRONIUS.

O, MY friend, it is never too late; the gates of mercy are ever open to receive the penitent; our gracious God deſires not the death of a ſinner; but whenever he ſhall turn from his wickedneſs, ſincerely repent of his paſt offences, and ſtedfaſtly reſolve to lead a new life, has promiſed, for the ſake of our bleſſed Redeemer, to ſave his ſoul alive.

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

Hold, hold, Sophronius, you torture me to madneſs! what have I to do with that Redeemer? He is no Saviour to me! Will he mediate for me, who have diſavowed him, ridiculed, and reviled him?

SOPHRONIUS.

Alas! alas!

CALLISTUS.

Ay, Sir, alas, indeed! now your ſheet anchor's gone — O, horror! there they are again! they beckon me away! — O, no, not yet —— I will not, cannot come — I have not told it yet — O ſpare me yet a day, an hour! Save me —— ſave me! mercy! mercy! — Save me, great God! —— So! — Sophronius? are you there? O, I am glad to ſee you! give me your hand —— O, coward guilt!

SOPHRONIUS.

GREAT GOD — what is it, Sir? this is the ſecond time you have amazed me thus!

CALLISTUS.

IT is ſo —— I am ſorry for it — but there is no end of the torments of a mind like mine! —— O for a day, an hour of peace and eaſe! — never, never more muſt I taſte them for a moment.

SOPHRONIUS.

O CALLISTUS —— O my friend! — nothing but *your* ſorrow can equal mine! —— it *will* avail! heaven can have no more; demands no more.

O GRACIOUS Being, eſſence of goodneſs! vouchſafe to caſt an eye of pity on thy diſconſolate creatures! — See our eyes ſtreaming with tears! — our hearts melting with fervent ſorrow! —— poor worthleſs

worthleſs creatures as we are, we can make no other ſatisfaction for all the offences we commit againſt thy Divine Majeſty! — O do not diſdain his broken contrite ſpirit!

CALLISTUS.

LET *me* join — I cannot ſpeak — hear him — hear thy faithful ſervant — ſee me humbled to the duſt — pity — ſpare me — ſave me — have mercy on a miſerable wretch —— *Can* it be, conſiſtent with thy juſtice! — it cannot be! — O SOPHRONIUS, it *cannot* be! — After all this remorſe, — after all theſe warnings, — theſe calls to repentance, I perſiſted in my courſe of wickedneſs; I fled from miſery, but I fled *not* from ſin: fool that I was, I wanted to avoid the effect, yet attempted not to remove the cauſe: I changed my climate, but my mind was ſtill the ſame: in vain did the undiſtinguiſhing ſun ſhine upon

me with more unclouded brightneſs, all was ſtill black, and gloomy within: in vain did I mix in the livelieſt companies of the ſprightlieſt nation; I forced a ſmile upon my face, whilſt, in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, I curſed myſelf. —— And what, think you, was the deſperate remedy I at laſt applied to for relief? that ſtupefying opiate of the Soul, which ſheaths the edge of fear, and deſtroys the warmth of hope! I liſtened with eagerneſs to all who oppoſed and ridiculed religion; I embraced the hardy man, who denied there was a God — Yes, I *hoped* to be convinced that there was no governor of the univerſe; — and that all that I had believed 'till now, was prejudice and childiſh ſuperſtition: and what was the fruit of this noble freedom? why to flatter myſelf that Reaſon alone was to be our guide and judge; that there was no future tribunal; — that there was no hereafter: — yes, SOPHRONIUS, I would have perſuaded myſelf,

that this vile world was *all*; and rather than become good, I chose to become *nothing*. —— O noble expedient! O glorious ſtratagem! to ſculk into the grave; to ſleep for ever in the duſt; to be loſt in annihilation! —Now I had recovered ſome hopes of eaſe; I had now a new proſpect of peace; at the worſt, I could fly to the hoſpitable arms of death; there, no wretch is denied an aſylum; whenever I was weary of the load of life, here I could lay it down, and take my reſt for ever. —— Why did I not then ſeize this refuge? I was not happy; I was not ſatisfied with my preſent ſituation; — but, O! I *feared* to change it! —my new hopes were falſe; I felt they were ſo; and dared not to rely upon them: well might I ſay, I *flattered* myſelf; I did not, I could not believe the abſurdities which I would fain have introduced into the place of my former principles; but my mind refuſed to ſubmit to the ignominious change: however,

ever, I hung as it were in a pleaſing ſuſpenſe; pleaſing, I mean, in compariſon with my late ſituation; but far, very far from pleaſant: I had amuſed my ſoul with vain phantoms of hope, ſtaggered my reaſon with imaginary difficulties, and lulled my conſcience into a deluſive ſtupidity; but ſickneſs has awakened it; more powerful diſeaſe has broke the enchantment of ſcepticiſm, and diſpelled the clouds it had raiſed around me: O poor defence againſt the piercing rays of truth, which now, at the approach of death, ruſh upon my ſight, and diſcover to my trembling ſoul, unbounded proſpects of inevitable life! O, SOPHRONIUS, thoſe proſpects which to you are ſo glorious, to me are gloomy and horrible! — Why were not my eyes opened before I completed my ruin! before I entered upon that dreadful ſcene, which will make you fly me! Yes, you will leave me, SOPHRONIUS, you will abandon me to my dreadful fate; ſhun

me

me as a hideous fiend, before I have concluded this laſt part of my ſhocking narration.

SOPHRONIUS.

INDEED I will not leave you; what, ſhall I be ſevere againſt you, who are ſo ſevere upon yourſelf? Shall I condemn you, who have myſelf ſo much need of forgiveneſs? Shall I be unmoved by your piercing ſorrows, when I truſt in the mercy of God — confidently truſt — that *he* will have compaſſion on them? — Yes, CALLISTUS, this is ſincere repentance, and ſure it will be accepted. But, my deareſt friend, let me beſeech you to have pity on yourſelf; you muſt have reſpite; you ſhall not thus exhauſt your ſpirits; this is the only thing in which I will oppoſe you, but I will hear no more at preſent.

CALLISTUS.

ALAS, my friend, I forgot that you have had no refreſhment ſince your journey.

Forgive my inattention. —— Come, I think I will try to ſhift the ſcene; with your help I will leave this ſad apartment. —— My kind comforter, you are my only ſupport!

SOPHRONIUS.

GENTLY, dear Sir, ——

DIALOGUE II.

CALLISTUS. SOPHRONIUS.

[*This converſation paſt on the day after the former.* — SOPHRONIUS *is entering the chamber of* CALLISTUS, — *the firſt time he had ſeen him that day.*]

CALLISTUS.

IS it SOPHRONIUS? it *is* my excellent friend. May every day ſhine on you as bright as this! may health and happineſs for ever attend you! may cœleſtial glories reward your goodneſs.

SOPHRONIUS.

How does my dear CALLISTUS? how do you find yourſelf to day? I think I may pronounce you better than when firſt I ſaw you.

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

I *live* SOPHRONIUS; I ſee the ſun again; and what is a more welcome ſight, I ſee my SOPHRONIUS once again; I graſp his honeſt hand; I view his benevolent countenance; I hear his comfortable voice; once more I taſte of pleaſure.

SOPHRONIUS.

AND like a faithful friend, immediately communicate a large ſhare to me. Believe me, deareſt Sir, I hardly ever knew a greater pleaſure than to hear you ſpeak thus chearfully.

CALLISTUS.

You ever make your own happineſs; it grows out of your goodneſs. Your kindneſs has done more for me than the ſkill of my phyſicians, you have prolonged my life a day at leaſt; you have given a recruit of ſpirits to my languid blood; you have ſpoken comfort to my trembling ſoul.

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS.

HAPPY am I to have been made the inſtrument of any good to my CALLISTUS.

CALLISTUS.

The Inſtrument? think you that I dare look higher than yourſelf for bleſſings? O no, SOPHRONIUS, I cannot hope for favour from any being ſuperior to yourſelf; but you are indulgent to me, even to a weakneſs; you forget your own dignity whilſt you ſmile on me.—Well, I beg your pardon, I ſee I pain your modeſt heart. But come, if you wiſh me to prolong this interval of eaſe, this glimpſe of joy, preſerve me from myſelf; divert my thoughts on you again. You have breakfaſted I hope.

SOPHRONIUS.

YES, Sir; I knew you would be diſpleaſed if I ſtayed for you.

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

THAT's right.—But think not, though I am ſo bad a ſleeper, that I have been in bed all this time; no, I have been doing buſineſs this morning, I have been making a Will; but I leave you nothing, SOPHRONIUS; you want nothing, you are contented. But, my friend, I aſked you ſome queſtions yeſterday, which I don't remember you anſwered, and I was too intent upon myſelf to repeat them; but now I have more time; I feel as if I ſhould live all this day; and I would devote a little of it to this ſtranger pleaſure, before I return to myſelf, and wretchedneſs. Tell me, my dear friend, how many children you have, and whether they and the amiable URANIA enjoy good health? Tell me the ſtory of your loves; give me the hiſtory of your life, ſince I ceaſed to be CALLISTUS: keep me with you, and ſave me from myſelf, as long as you can.

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS.

I HOPED I had reconciled you to yourself.

CALLISTUS.

O NO! never, never can that be! you have done more than I thought possible, you have softened my despair, you have let in a ray of light upon my utter darkness.

BUT I am impatient to know how you have passed your time, how you have pursued happiness and found it.

SOPHRONIUS.

ALAS, my friend, the story of my life will give you little entertainment: I have nothing extraordinary to relate. My way was plain before me, and I never had vivacity enough to start aside from it. I set out in life without forming any great expectations of happiness; all my observations and reflections taught me that the best I might hope for, was peace and ease.

When I left the College, for the Inn of Court, I forſook a way of life that was agreeable enough to me, for one in favour of which, I was far from being prejudiced; but it was my father's deſire that I ſhould engage in it, and I reſolved to comply. You, my friend, took care, that I ſhould not ſurfeit myſelf, at firſt, with my new ſtudies, by inſiſting on my partaking with you, of the diverſions and gaieties of the town; but I began to be cloyed with them, when it pleaſed heaven to put a ſudden ſtop to my pleaſures, by taking my worthy father from a life of toil and tumult, to (I doubt not) a ſtate of perfect repoſe and happineſs. I own it was ſome conſolation in my real ſorrow, to think that I might now excuſe myſelf from engaging in the ſame fatigues and cares from which he was juſt releaſed; but before I reſolved to forſake this road of life, I conſidered maturely, and compared the advantages of it, with the inconveniencies: the fruits I might *poſſibly* reap

reap from my labours, were riches, honours, and fame; for none of which I felt in myself any violent passion: the sacrifices I must make for these acquisitions were, my leisure, my retirement, my favourite studies, my favourite amusements; in short, all my natural inclinations, all that was really and essentially necessary to my happiness. I therefore resolved to pursue my own plan; for upon looking into my affairs, I found that from my estates, and money, I should have a clear income of five hundred pounds a year; and this I was convinced was as much as I should want for all my schemes. I communicated my resolution to my friend, who would have persuaded me to enter into the fashionable taste of happiness; but the truth was, my CALLISTUS, I was not more weary than afraid of the life I had led some time; I therefore determined to quit the town, which I found I could do without much pain, though I could not remain in it without

danger; my only mortification was the parting with my agreeable friend; I took my leave of him with ſevere regret, and haſtened to a place which at firſt appeared a melancholy ſcene to me, who was now to act alone upon it; but I had ſtudied my part before hand, and ſoon grew familiar to it.

I IMMEDIATELY indulged myſelf in one of my favourite amuſements, and ſet about the improvement of my garden, and the grounds about the houſe: which I have found a never-failing entertainment for above theſe twelve years; and may now boaſt that my habitation, though not fine, is very pleaſant and agreeable. I flatter myſelf that my friend will come and ſee my improvements as ſoon as he is able to move; for though he has far more elegant and noble places, he will find at none of them ſuch faithful, aſſiduous, and affectionate ſervants, who will exert all their powers to recover his

health, to enliven his ſpirits, and promote his eaſe and pleaſure.

CALLISTUS.

A THOUSAND thanks for that kind thought: but it is impoſſible, my friend, do not flatter *yourſelf*; for as to me, I can no longer be impoſed upon by deluſive hope. No, good Sir, you have a little revived my ſpirits by your gracious preſence, and your unparalleled kindneſs; you have given me ſome relief from my torturing fears, by the heavenly balm of your diſcourſe, by your charitable, conſolatory arguments laſt night; but you cannot renew my vital powers; they are ſpent, my friend, worn out and gone; you cannot reſtore my peace of mind, my ſelf-ſatisfaction; and therefore I ſhould be a burthen to myſelf, and you: But I muſt die, SOPHRONIUS, perhaps to-day; and God, of his boundleſs goodneſs, hear your earneſt prayers and mine for mercy!

SOPHRONIUS.

AMEN!

CALLISTUS.

BUT do not let me interrupt you—— go on, dear Sir, and never mention my wretched name again.

SOPHRONIUS.

THERE were two families in the ſame pariſh that were agreeable neighbours to me; the firſt was that of a gentleman of a large eſtate who had a wife and four children, the eldeſt and the youngeſt of which were daughters; the ſons are worthy, ſenſible men; but the ſecond has much the moſt genius and vivacity; circumſtances which do not always make a man the happier. ——

CALLISTUS.

IT muſt be his own fault then.

SOPHRONIUS.

THE man who rides a horſe of great mettle, has need of much ſkill and attention.

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

WELL, I won't interrupt you, Sir.

SOPHRONIUS.

BUT my neareſt and beſt neighbour was the miniſter of the pariſh, whoſe wife was a relation to my other neighbour, the patron of the living: ſhe died before my father; ſo that the family, when I came to live in the country, conſiſted of the clergyman and his only child, a daughter, then about twenty years of age: as her father loſt his other children before they were ripe for his inſtructions, it was his chief pleaſure, to repleniſh her heart with virtuous ſentiments and religious principles; and to improve her mind in every branch of uſeful knowledge. You muſt have known him, or at leaſt have heard that he was a man of extenſive learning and great abilities: but you could not know all his excellence; none but his daughter and myſelf

could know it thoroughly; nay, I doubt not but a thouſand of his meritorious actions, and benevolent purpoſes, were known only to the Omniſcient. He was a true Chriſtian; modeſt, humble, ſocial, and humane: well might he be univerſally beloved and reſpected, who could not give offence, and who was ever watchful for opportunities to do good, and to give pleaſure. URANIA was the daughter of his mind; ſhe inherited all his virtues, and perfections, even his underſtanding and genius: think what an aſſemblage of internal excellences, refined and finiſhed by female delicacy, and adorned with the elegant dreſs of a moſt amiable perſon! O dear delight of my days, may heaven preſerve you to me!—pardon me, CALLISTUS, I cannot think of her to this hour without rapture.

CALLISTUS.

PARDON you, SOPHRONIUS, for giving me an exquiſite pleaſure! think you I can

I can hear of your happineſs without ſharing in it. Go on, good Sir.——

SOPHRONIUS.

O WHAT a heart have you, CALLISTUS, who can take ſuch a tender intereſt in the felicity of your friend!

CALLISTUS.

STRANGE, inconſiſtent heart!——I do indeed moſt cordially congratulate you on your felicity; and whilſt I think of your happineſs, I ceaſe to be miſerable;——and yet, this heart, this cruel heart, could conſent to outrages——But no more at preſent;——I am ſinking into myſelf and miſery——raiſe me up again, SOPHRONIUS.

SOPHRONIUS.

THINK how delightfully my time was ſpent in converſing with two ſuch companions; for URANIA, though diffident among ſtrangers, is eaſy, free, and chearful with thoſe of whom ſhe has conceived

a good

a good opinion; and when there are none but ſuch in company, ſhe bears a ſhining part in converſation. But with her great ſuperiority of underſtanding, and knowledge, to moſt perſons of both ſexes, ſhe is far from being aſſuming or oſtentatious; the moſt refined and delicate ſentiments, the moſt judicious remarks, the deepeſt reflections and the brighteſt turns of thought fall from her lips with perfect indifference; for they appear not to her uncommon or ſtriking. She ſeems to think herſelf upon a level with every one ſhe converſes with; ſhe is eager to learn, and as ready to communicate her knowledge, and that without the leaſt affectation, with no other thought, I am perſuaded, than that of being as ſerviceable as ſhe can to all about her.—Could I remain long indifferent to ſuch perfection?——I ſpent much of my time in this delightful ſociety, and I felt my pleaſure in it increaſe every day; indeed I could hardly reliſh any other.

I WAS

I WAS ſoon ſenſible that my admiration and eſteem for the lovely URANIA was riſing into paſſion; but I had reſolved not to ſuffer myſelf to ruſh headlong into an engagement of this kind: I could ſee no objection but her fortune, which in all probability would be very ſmall; but was that a conſideration to be poiſed againſt ſuch tranſcendent excellence? in my ſcale of happineſs it had no weight at all.

CALLISTUS.

OH! —— [*Groans.*

SOPHRONIUS.

SIR! What's the matter?

CALLISTUS.

NOTHING at all—Go on, if you pleaſe.

SOPHRONIUS.

As I could find no reaſon to reſiſt my paſſion, it grew upon me daily; but I had reſolution enough not to make any declaration

declaration of it, unleſs by my eyes, which it was impoſſible to reſtrain from ſpeaking: I ſometimes fancied that URANIA underſtood their meaning, and was not offended at it: O with what a glowing pleaſure did that flattering fancy expand my heart! — I was not without competitors for her favour: I had reaſon to believe that the eldeſt of my young neighbours ſighed in ſecret for her; but as he was a man of honour, and knew that he could never gain his family's conſent to marry a perſon ſo much inferior to him in fortune, he never betrayed his paſſion but by ſighs, and perhaps even thoſe were unperceived by all but his rivals. His behaviour upon this occaſion greatly raiſed my eſteem for him; I am perſuaded it was in purſuance of a reſolution to get the better of a paſſion which it was not proper to indulge, that he ſolicited his father's conſent to go abroad. But his younger brother was not ſo ſcrupulous;

he

he came down about a month before his brother left us, to ſpend his vacation in the country; and no ſooner was the only rival he apprehended, gone, than he aſſumed the character of her lover. URANIA was diſtreſſed by this ſudden attack: neither her inclination nor her honour would permit her to hearken to his addreſſes: ſhe knew that *her* father was indebted to *his* for all he was worth; that *his* father would be outrageouſly offended at *hers*, if he ſhould be thought to encourage ſuch an affair; — nay, ſhe knew not whether the young gentleman's deſigns were honourable; he had never hinted at any propoſals that might characterize them for ſuch: — ſhe knew the impetuoſity of her lover's temper, and feared ſome diſagreeable conſequences from it. The perplexity of her mind ſoon manifeſted itſelf in a viſible uneaſineſs; ſhe grew melancholy; I perceived it, and watched the effects, 'till I thought I had diſcovered the cauſe: however,

however, I was desirous of having the secret from herself; I pressed her to reveal it; but she eluded my endeavours for a long time: at length, one day, after he had teized her exceedingly, and even offered to proceed to impertinent freedoms, she yielded to my persuasions, and with tears in her eyes, and blushes on her cheeks, gave me sufficiently to understand the cause of her distress. This instantly determined me: I told her that if she could condescend to free herself from the importunities of one man, by listning to the tendereſt and sincereſt vows of another, I had an expedient to propose; — and immediately taking her trembling hand, without waiting for an answer, I led her to her father's study; and there, without preface, avowed my passion; and in words expressive of the greateſt respect, and the most perfect esteem for both, with the most tender, the most sincere, and faithful love for her, that ever warmed an honeſt heart, besought

their favour. The good man ſtood motionleſs and ſilent with ſurprize: at length the tears ſtarted to his eyes, he caught me in his arms, and held me long with a paſſionate embrace; 'till quitting me ſuddenly, he cried — No, generous Sophronius, it muſt not be; — I cannot make her worthy of you. Not worthy of me, did you ſay, dear Sir? O that all my powers, my whole Soul devoted to her ſervice, could make me worthy of her! —— She has no fortune fit for your acceptance. — Talk not of fortune, I have more ambitious demands! give me the glory of human nature! give me your Urania! nothing leſs will ſatisfy my ardent wiſhes; nothing more can be added to my happineſs. —— He replied, Gain her conſent, and all I have, is yours; the jewel of my ſoul, and a poor five hundred pounds, all that my œconomy has been able to ſave; theſe, and my beſt ſervices, my conſtant wiſhes and prayers for your happineſs in this

world

world and the next, are all the acknowledgments I can make for the honour you do my family; for —— Do not oppreſs me! — was all I could ſay to ſtop him: I was indeed oppreſt with his goodneſs; and could no otherwiſe expreſs my ſenſe of it, or ſupport myſelf in the agitation I was in, than by leaning with my elbow on my own bent knee, with my cheek upon his hand, which I held in both my own: —— If you muſt kneel, dear Sir, ſaid he, *there* it would be rather leſs improper at preſent; turn, and try if ſhe can reſiſt the eloquence of thoſe gliſtning eyes. I turned round, and found her back towards me: Will you not look on me, Madam? She dried her eyes with her handkerchief; ſhe turned, and giving me her lovely hand, which I kiſſed with inexpreſſible rapture, — I am yours, worthy Sir, ſaid ſhe: — I have no doubt of your ſincerity, and will not pretend to make a merit of an action, which is but a juſt expreſſion of my eſteem for

your

your virtues. —Here was a noble frankneſs, my CALLISTUS! there is a dignity in her manner that ſcorns to ſubmit to the little arts of affectation, and the purity of her thoughts wants no diſguiſe.

CALLISTUS.

HAPPY SOPHRONIUS! happy URANIA! Happineſs like yours is the natural conſequence of virtue; and miſery, miſery like mine, the inevitable attendant upon vice.

SOPHRONIUS.

I HAVE not done yet.

CALLISTUS.

O, I am glad of it. When you have done, I die.

SOPHRONIUS.

GOD forbid!

CALLISTUS.

AMEN, amen —— Go on, *excellent* SOPHRONIUS.

SOPHRONIUS.

DEAREST CALLISTUS, do not ſend me to look into myſelf with ſhame! call me happy, and you remind me to be more grateful, but call me not *good*; alas, it makes me recollect how many offences I have to be forgiven! Proſperity has been my trial, Sir; and God grant, that through his aſſiſtance and mercy, I may be approved at laſt!

CALLISTUS.

O, SOPHRONIUS, what have you done! What a concluſion you have brought me to! If *you* are not good, then what am *I?* How can you be ſo inconſiſtent! but lately you flattered me with heaven; and now you ſhut me out from all hopes of it.

SOPHRONIUS.

SIR, if we had only our own merits to plead, we might both be deemed equally diſtant from it: but I truſt in the ſame goodneſs

goodneſs and compaſſion, the ſame ſatiſfaction and redemption for us both. Who ſhall ſet bounds to infinite mercy? If it cannot be extended to you, who ſhall ſay, it would reach to me? But granting you have moſt to be forgiven, has not your repentance — O, CALLISTUS, there I muſt learn of you!

CALLISTUS.

WELL, I will call you excellent; exceedingly good I am ſure you are to me! I cannot expreſs the ſenſe I have of your goodneſs; —— and ſo relieve me from the vain attempt by the continuation of your ſtory.

SOPHRONIUS.

I WAS ſcarce got home to reflect upon the buſineſs of that happy morning, and the conſequences of it, when I was interrupted in my delightful meditations, by a viſit from my rival: he accoſted me with great civility, but with an air of

importance; he told me he was come on a ſolemn embaſſy, and he hoped, and could not doubt, he ſhould be a very welcome meſſenger. He came, he ſaid, from his father, with the approbation of all the family, with propoſals which would do honour to both parties: that my known worth and prudence made an alliance with me thought honourable; —I fear, CALLISTUS, it is a ſign we are in a bad world, when a man's refraining from flagrant wickedneſs, can make him remarked as extraordinary.—Well, my alliance, it ſeems, was not eſteemed diſhonourable, by a family who thought they gave ſome proofs of their own merit, when they offered me their eldeſt daughter, a beautiful and accompliſhed lady, with a fortune to which I could have no pretenſions, but by that worth, with which they claimed kindred; but what, he was ſure, I ſhould think the greateſt honour, was, that the lady was already prepared to favour my addreſs;—indeed

deed he had ſome reaſon to ſuſpect that ſhe had long looked upon me with partial eyes; — to ſay the truth — for he dared truſt my generoſity with the ſecret, her illneſs had diſcovered it. Here he ſtopped. I was amazed, I was ſhocked — ſhe had indeed been ill; — was ill; but little did I ſuſpect the cauſe: URANIA had ſo thoroughly ingroſſed my attention, that no other woman could attract it. I anſwered, that I was equally ſurprized, honoured, and afflicted by this propoſal: that not to keep him in ſuſpenſe, I would at once inform him, it was impoſſible for me to accept the great honour which was offered me, becauſe my affections and my vows were previouſly engaged. — Engaged, Sir? cried he with ſurprize — Yes, Sir, replied I, engaged to URANIA. To whom, Sir? Engaged to whom did you ſay? — To the moſt amiable URANIA, Sir. — To URANIA! Sure — Sure, Sir, I do not hear you right! — This very morning

have I received her father's and her ſanction to my love. — 'Tis falſe, cried he, rage ſparkling in his eyes. — I pitied the poor youth, I was too happy to be angry, and compoſedly bid him go and aſk them, and then I did not doubt he would beg my pardon. ——You are not married, Sir? — No, Sir. — Nor ever ſhall be to *her*! He then ruſhed out of the houſe with the fury of a madman. He took my advice in part, for in a quarter of an hour afterwards, I had a meſſage from URANIA, to deſire me to come to her immediately. I found her in tears: ſhe told me, with a trembling voice, of the rude viſit he had made her: the furious boy (he was then but twenty years old) demanded abruptly whether ſhe was engaged — ſhe frankly told him ſhe was, and to whom — He ſtamped, and ſwore vehemently we ſhould both repent our treachery to him. — He reproached her with coquetry and infidelity, though ſhe ſolemnly proteſted, and I am firmly perſuaded,

ſuaded, ſhe had never given him the leaſt encouragement: he concluded, that if ſhe did indeed love SOPHRONIUS, ſhe ſhould be cautious how ſhe acted; for he vowed, if ſhe proceeded one ſtep further in this plot upon his peace, he would revenge himſelf on her in the way that would moſt hurt her.

Now I was angry; his brutal treatment of URANIA had rouſed the lion in me; if at that inſtant he had been within my reach — I fear I ſhould have had no command of myſelf. URANIA ſaw the agitation I was in; ſhe was ſtill more frightened; and upon my making a motion to go, ſhe fell down in a ſwoon at my feet. What a day was this! What ſtrange tranſitions! what violent emotions! O, CALLISTUS, what a world is this to ſet our hearts upon, when every raſh fool, where we are ſurrounded with thouſands, can put a ſudden ſtop to our happineſs; — can in a moment change it into perfect miſery.

I now forgot every thing but my love's diſtreſs. — Pity and ſorrow poſſeſſed me wholly.

LIFE returned to my URANIA's eyes, and bluſhes to her cheeks, when ſhe found herſelf in the arms of a man, before ſhe could recollect who he was; ſhe ſeemed to ſtrain her eyes open to look up in my face; and then, as if ſatisfied ſhe was in ſafe and honourable hands, ſhe laid her languid head upon my boſom in perfect confidence and peace. Pleaſure now renewed her claim; a new ſort of pleaſure warmed my heart; I felt my deareſt love in my arms; I conſidered myſelf, and my URANIA ſeemed to conſider me, in the glorious character of her comforter, and protector. I kiſſed her lovely forehead, and laid my glowing cheek upon it; ſhe raiſed up her head, and looked at me again with more enlivened eyes, with eyes enlivened by delight: — ineffable delight! — ſuperlative happineſs! when two honeſt hearts

can

can mix without reserve, without a doubt of each other's goodness? — Will you leave me? said she, with eyes that looked as if she knew I would not — No, my URANIA, never in distress! — But what am I doing? I could run on for ever, and forget every thing but my URANIA; — no, not my CALLISTOS. — I return to pursue his commands.

SHE signified her fears to me: I told her she need not be under any concern; my mind was serene again; all was peace and pleasure within: — that the delight I experienced whilst I held her in my arms, made me consider the greatness of my rival's disappointment with compassion: that it would be a shame for a man so happy as I was, not to bear with the impatience of a sufferer like him: that I meditated a plan to sooth his madness, and perhaps might assist him to cure it: and if she would give me leave, I would go and put my thought in execution. URANIA said she knew she might trust my

prudence

prudence and humanity; and God forbid she should ever obstruct the benevolent purposes of my heart.

I WENT home, and immediately sat down to write to my impetuous foe. I believe I can recollect the letter, for I wrote it with great deliberation, and have preserved it as a lesson to myself for the future.

CALLISTUS.

TRY, dear SOPHRONIUS, for I long to hear it.

SOPHRONIUS.

'SIR,

'WHEN you see my hand, and recollect some words which fell from 'you when you left my house, some 'angry words, perhaps you will expect 'an address different from what you will 'find here: but, Sir, when I consider 'the occasion of your passion, I can by 'no means think a rash expression is a 'sufficient cause for me to pursue your

'life, or hazard my own; eſpecially, 'when I conſider that yours is dear to a 'numerous family, which I greatly re-'ſpect and love, and can flatter myſelf 'that my own is of ſome importance to 'the happineſs of a few worthy perſons. 'But at the ſame time that you incurred '(I doubt not in your own opinion) *my* 'reſentment, you threatened me with '*yours*; — I am perſuaded you are too 'brave yourſelf, to ſuſpect that I have 'any baſe fear of that reſentment, tho' 'I wiſh to diſarm it: there was a time, 'when if I had unfortunately met you, 'I fear I ſhould have yielded to my own 'paſſion; but now I ſhould be aſhamed 'not to be able to pardon an infirmity 'in you, for which, in myſelf, I have 'already implored the forgiveneſs of 'heaven: the time I ſpeak of, was when 'I heard from the lady's own lips, the 'relation of your late behaviour to her. 'Indeed, Sir, you have much to anſwer 'for to her; for it is impoſſible you can

'think

'think (when you think coolly) that 'you have the leaſt pretence to con-'troul her actions, or to demand an ac-'count of them. Put yourſelf in my 'place for a moment, and me in yours, 'and ſee what you would think of *me*, 'if I were to pretend to arreſt you in 'the innocent purſuit of happineſs: I 'have already placed myſelf in your ſi-'tuation, and feel that you deſerve com-'paſſion: but, be bold, SEBASTIAN; 'exert your fortitude; exert your rea-'ſon; and, inſtead of pity, deſerve ad-'miration; deſerve your own, and hea-'ven's applauſe; ſubdue a paſſion, which 'can never be gratified: diſturb not 'the peace of a virtuous woman whom 'you profeſs to love; deſtroy not your 'own peace, by harbouring deſigns, 'which muſt be as fruitleſs as they are 'injurious: pardon me that I ſhould ſay it '—believe me, I mean not to inſult you; 'but — her affections — I will ſay no 'more. — You are young, time will do

'much for you: you are amiable, and
'your virtues and perfections muſt one
'day meet with their reward: be juſt,
'be generous, and you will be happy;
'happier at leaſt than you could poſſibly
'be by any other means. If you have
'the nobleneſs of mind, the candour
'you ſee I ſuppoſe you to have, you
'will juſtify me in calling myſelf ſtill

'Your faithful friend
'and humble ſervant.'

I KNEW that SEBASTIAN had good ſenſe, and a good heart; and therefore was perſuaded that if he could be brought to think coolly, he would think rightly: you will find by his anſwer that I was not much miſtaken: it was delivered to me the next morning, and I believe was in theſe words:

'SIR,

'SIR,

'WHEN I received your letter, I did in-
'deed expect to find the contents very dif-
'ferent, for I was conscious of having spo-
'ken words in passion, which I doubt not
'were injurious, tho' I cannot particular-
'ly recollect them; for at that time I was
'hardly in my senses. You will find that
'I mean still to be your rival, Sir, your
'rival in virtue; would to God you were
'not mine in love! You exhort me to
'magnanimity; I have endeavoured to
'avail myself of your advice; and the
'first instance was in determining not to
'write you an answer 'till this morning,
'that I might have time to compose my
'tumultuous thoughts, in order to judge
'fairly of the contents of your letter;
'the consequence of this was, that I
'could not but perceive that I had been
'greatly in the wrong, and ought to ac-
'knowledge it: the next instance is, that
'I now freely desire your pardon; and

will

'will truſt to your generoſity, to inter-
'cede with the much injured URANIA
'for her forgiveneſs of a fault, which
'can have no excuſe but from the
'phrenzy of a man in deſpair: I dare
'not ſee her face again, upon ſeveral
'accounts; but if ſhe can ever think
'without abhorrence and contempt, of
'a wretch, who wants not that aggrava-
'tion to his ſhame and miſery, it would
'be generous to let me know it. ——
'Time may do much, you ſay; I will
'try what time can do — abſence too,
'I will try; — I will return immediately
'to college, and, if I can, will ſtudy
'there; religion is my proper ſtudy;
'I want all its aſſiſtance to enable me to
'bear my own lot, and to think, without
'rancour, of yours. SOPHRONIUS, fare-
'wel: you will be happy in ſpite of me,
'for you deſerve to be ſo.

'*If I commend thee, ſure thy worth is great!*

'I hope

'I hope to see you no more, 'till I can with 'sincerity subscribe myself

'Your friend,

'SEBASTIAN.'

CALLISTUS.

POOR SEBASTIAN! I really pity the unhappy youth!

SOPHRONIUS.

PERHAPS this was the most fortunate incident in his life; it gave a new turn to his thoughts; he was in danger from his extreme vivacity; this disappointment gave a check to it. Affliction is often our best friend, whose awful lessons are never so necessary as in youth: we are apt to set out in life, ardent in the pursuit of happiness, and sanguine in the hopes of attaining it; but we generally go upon a wrong scent; we seek for it among diversions and sensual pleasures, where it is not to be found; happy they

who are called off by affliction, and thrown into the right courſe!

SEBASTIAN kept his reſolution, and ſet out the next day for the univerſity: his books diverted his thoughts from their melancholy object, and by degrees engaged all his attention: the chearful ſociety of the place, and the natural propenſity of youthful minds to joy, ſoon enabled him to recover his peace of mind, and he returned to the enjoyment of life with more appetite from this interruption. I did not ſee him again, 'till above a year afterwards, when he came in perſon, and politely aſked URANIA's and my pardon for the uneaſineſs he had given us; and wiſhed us all joy and happineſs. He is now our worthy rector, is himſelf married, and his and his wife's agreeable converſation has once more renewed my pleaſure in viſiting the rectory. Soon after his departure, URANIA became indeed *my* URANIA; we ſolemnly dedicated ourſelves to each other; and have ſuc-

ceeded by the aſſiſtance of heaven, as far as the circumſtances of this imperfect ſtate will permit, in our mutual and ſincere endeavours to promote each other's happineſs.

And here of courſe ends my ſtory.

CALLISTUS.

Not ſo, my friend; you have never yet told me how many children you have, nor any thing concerning them. Come, ſurely Sophronius you may prolong my entertainment a little.

SOPHRONIUS.

We have had ſix, but the laſt was taken from us; that, and the death of my excellent father-in-law, are the only afflictions it has pleaſed heaven to ſend us ſince our marriage. We loſt him almoſt four years ago; a grievous loſs it was! for in him we were deprived of a delightful companion, a moſt fond parent, and a perfect friend. Urania

grieved

grieved as one thoroughly ſenſible of the great good ſhe was bereft of; but not as one without hope: ſhe profeſſed herſelf aſhamed of the exceſs of her ſorrow, when ſhe conſidered that it was only for her own pleaſure; for as to him, ſhe doubted not but he had changed his ſtate infinitely for the better; and had an humble confidence that in a few years they ſhould meet again, never more to feel the pain of parting. But notwithſtanding theſe conſolatory arguments, this affliction hurt her; what muſt it have done if ſhe had wanted them? What ſhould I do, if I could not call them to my aſſiſtance? I begin to prepare myſelf for my ſhare of mortal miſery; for from this calamity, and now lately the loſs of the child, I fear URANIA's conſtitution begins to decline: God only knows! perhaps it may pleaſe him to reſtore it; if not, his holy will be done!

CALLISTUS.

O HAPPY SOPHRONIUS! you know not, cannot know what misery is: with your hopes, your expectations, your certain prospects of eternal happiness, soon to succeed to transient sufferings, how easily are such sufferings to be endured!

I FEAR you have done, Sir. Be so good then to reach me that paper which lies upon the escrutoire. This is my Will: I have left your children a thousand pounds a-piece, and you a mark of my perfect confidence in your goodness and friendship, by nameing you sole executor. — Not a word, I beseech you — it is perfectly needless — I know your heart. I would desire you to keep this in your own custody; there is a duplicate executed in that escrutoire. Your trouble will soon begin; and I hope be soon ended. And now, farewel to every sensation of pleasure!

BUT before I begin upon the remainder of my shocking story, I will endea-

vour to repreſent to you what paſſed in my mind after you left me laſt night.

You found me, in deſpair: I was already in the jaws of hell; I could not, durſt not think of repentance, which preſumes a poſſibility of forgiveneſs: I could not, durſt not think of praying; I ſpent my time in recollecting all my ſins, for which I pronounced ſentence againſt my own ſoul. Ghoſts and fiends ſeemed to ſtalk about my chamber, and terrified me almoſt to madneſs; the little ſleep I had was diſturbed with horrid dreams: but, in the night before I ſent for you, I dreamed that I was on the brink of a frightful precipice, and that I was puſhed forward by an irreſiſtible power, 'till it ſeemed impoſſible for me to avoid the certain perdition; when, in the inſtant that I was going to plunge, I felt myſelf ſnatcht back ſome paces: I turned to look for my wonderful deliverer, when I beheld, with equal joy and confuſion, my guardian angel, So-

PHRONIUS. The vaſt ſurprize awaked me; but ſo ſtrong was the impreſſion, that even when awake, I addreſſed myſelf to ſpeak to you. I was preſently ſenſible that I was in my own room and bed; but it ſeemed perfectly light; I ſaw every thing plainly, but you was the delightful object upon which I fixed my eyes: my own voice recalled my ſenſes, baniſhed your image, and left me in darkneſs, all but a dim lamp, which was hardly perceptible through my curtains. I found myſelf in a cold ſweat, my heart and every pulſe in my body beating with the utmoſt violence and precipitation. It was a long while before I was tolerably compoſed, and could recollect with ſome degree of calmneſs, this ſtriking dream; happily did it ſtrike me; for, without ſuch an impulſe, I ſhould hardly have had the confidence to hope for the comfort you have brought me. The firſt thing I did when I roſe, was to write the letter you received, and

diſpatch

diſpatch a carriage to fetch you. I thought it an age 'till it returned.—You came—my beſt friend! and the ſight of you ſeemed like a glimpſe of heaven. Dear, humane friend, your preſence brought me back to life; your words have diſtilled like healing balm upon my wounded ſoul; O how you have comforted, and ſoftened my obdurate heart! I have wept, I have prayed, I have looked up to heaven, and ſeen a Creator happy in communicating happineſs to his creatures; a judge of boundleſs mercy; and a Redeemer of unſpeakable goodneſs, who would not that any ſhould periſh everlaſtingly: I have conceived a hope of the poſſibility that even I, wretched ſtraggler as I have been, may yet be recalled, and received again into the fold, though by far the moſt unworthy of the flock.

AFTER your kind, conſolatory converſation laſt night, I went to bed with a mind more eaſy and compoſed than I

had felt for ſome months: as ſoon as I was left alone, I addreſſed myſelf to prayer, with a heart penetrated with the moſt lively ſenſe of my own deplorable unworthineſs, which might well produce the deepeſt humiliation, the moſt ſevere contrition, and an agony of truly penitential ſorrow. O what a dreadful thing it is to repent of ſuch ſins as mine! how unequal a purchaſe of all the tranſient pleaſures which in thoſe ſins I ſought! My eyes and face were ſcalded with floods of bitter tears! ſurely my heart bled within me! my corporal powers were unable long to ſuſtain the violent agitation of my mind, and uniting to drag down my unwilling, ſtill aſpiring ſoul to earth, plunged it into a deep ſleep for ſome hours: I waked calm, and wonderfully refreſhed; and had only time to ſigh out my grateful and profound acknowledgments for the bleſſing, when I dropped aſleep again; but not in ſuch deep oblivion; my imagination ſlept no more;

more; but, as if pleaſed with the interval it had from its cruel labours, entertained me with wild amuſing fancies. I waked again to the ſad thoughts of dying, but not with the ſame hopeleſs horror of living in eternal miſery: I addreſſed myſelf, with a confidence which I feared might be preſumptuous, to the throne of mercy; but not without the moſt profound heart-humiliation, and freſh ſtreams of deep repentant ſorrow. I aroſe with more compoſure of mind than I had felt for ſome months. I reſolved immediately to perform the laſt buſineſs I had to do on earth; and to leave ſome teſtimony of my grateful acknowledgments to you, dear Sir, for all your goodneſs to me: I then recollected the ſad taſk I had to finiſh, which obliged me to recal horrid ſcenes, that plunged me into new terrors, from which your chearing preſence again relieved me.

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS.

DEAREST CALLISTUS, what obliges you to purſue this taſk which you ſeem ſo much to dread, and ſo indeed do I, for I fear it will hurt you? You are now compoſed, refreſhed, and amended, I think, in every reſpect; why ſhould you again ruffle and fatigue your ſpirits? If it muſt be done, ſtay 'till you are better, ſtay till you are ſtronger, and then you ſhall do what you pleaſe.

CALLISTUS.

ALAS, my friend, why will you ſtill flatter yourſelf and me? It is ſtrange that I cannot perſuade you to believe it impoſſible for me ever to be well again! My phyſicians have aſſured me that I cannot live; and if it had not been too ſure, they would not have ſaid ſo. No, SOPHRONIUS, I have abſolutely no more hopes in this life; and oh! I ſtill fear that when you have heard me out, you will

will deſtroy the hope you would revive in me of another; however, it is a penance I have impoſed upon myſelf, and I cannot reſt 'till I have done it: I have already deferred it too long, and fear at laſt I ſhall not have time to finiſh it.

SOPHRONIUS.

WELL, Sir, if it muſt be ſo, I beſeech you keep me no longer in ſuſpenſe.

CALLISTUS.

WHERE did I leave off yeſterday?

SOPHRONIUS.

I LEFT you, Sir, abroad.

CALLISTUS.

O, YES, you left me ſurrounded with infidels and atheiſts. But I believe I did not mention to you another friend I called to my aſſiſtance, and all too weak to ſecure me from the aſſaults of perſecuting conſcience. You know, SOPHRONIUS,

that for ſome years of my youth, I never was guilty of exceſs in drinking; and I may do myſelf the juſtice to ſay, that I never was tempted to this vice by the allurements of pleaſure; but, alas! I was driven to it at laſt by the fear of pain. Soon after my diſappointment with Lucinda, I had recourſe to this fatal remedy, which daily procured me a ceſſation for ſome hours from all mental ſufferings; but it ſoon brought on new bodily complaints, of which I was ſenſible every morning; but, to aſſuage the more intolerable anguiſh of my conſcience, I returned every night to the ſtupefying poiſon. This brutal practice I continued, even in a country remarkable for ſobriety, and found my new friends not averſe to this ſeaſonable ſupport of a bad argument. And now, abſurdly boldeſt, when in every reſpect weakeſt, we bravely defied the living God; and ridiculed and reviled the great Saviour of mankind.—My ſoul ſhrinks within me whilſt I ſpeak it!

it! —— I ſee you are ſhockt too, and therefore I will dwell no longer on the tremendous madneſs.

My temporal puniſhments ſoon began; my appetite inſenſibly decayed; pains ſeized my ſtomach and bowels; my nerves relaxed; my ſtrength forſook me: I uſed more poiſon as an antidote; my ſpirits exhaled, and my fleſh melted with the conſuming fire. I went to the Spaw, but the waters could not cure my ſoul; *there* were my moſt racking pains; theſe were to be aſſuaged, whatever became of my wretched body: however, in ſpite of my intemperance, the ſalutary ſtreams gave me ſome relief; but I was adviſed to return to our own Bath.

Once more I re-viſited my native country; but with no joyful heart; the Fury ſtill purſued, and laſhed me from ſhore to ſhore. O gracious God, how little worthy was I to partake the ſovereign bleſſing which thou, with healing hand,

hand, poureſt forth equally to the juſt and unjuſt from the perennial ſpring!

I HAD not been at Bath above a fortnight before I perceived a great amendment: my ſtomach was warmed and ſtrengthened, and my appetite in ſome meaſure reſtored; my ſpirits were enlivened; my fleſh increaſing, and my colour returning. I could not experience this wonderful change without ſenſations of pleaſure, nay, of gratitude; I could not but acknowledge the hand that healed me, and I longed to return my thanks; but how could I dare to lift up my eyes to that Heaven, to which I had ſo long wilfully and ſtudiouſly cloſed them! My reaſon ſeemed to be returning with my health; my mind was certainly clearer than it had been for a long time; for I was plainly told by my phyſician, that if I continued my exceſſes there, I ſhould inevitably kill myſelf ſoon: I trembled and obeyed: Why did I *tremble*—but that in ſpite of all

my

my bravadoes, and ſelf-deceit, I ſtill *believed*.—And, O, fool that I was, why, if I believed, did I not obey Him, whom if I had preſerved my friend, nought elſe could have made me tremble! I made this reflection then, which produced reſolutions of reformation; but, alas! they were too feeble to reſiſt the temptations I was ſoon to experience.

I HAD been at Bath a month, when one day as I was walking from the rooms to my lodging, I was ſtopped by a crowd moving towards me; in the midſt of which I perceived an elderly gentlewoman, whom I recollected to have ſeen at the pump-room, in whoſe face the trickling tears were the leaſt indication of diſtreſs: by her ſide walked an ill-looking fellow, whom ſhe now and then lifted up her dejected eyes to obſerve, with a mixture of terror and diſguſt: behind, was a young woman, whoſe face I could not ſee, the upper part of it being concealed by her hat, and the lower

by her white handkerchief, which being frequently applied to her eyes, ſhewed that ſhe was a perſon intereſted in the melancholy ſcene: I enquired what it meant, and was told it was only an old woman arreſted. I had not yet entirely loſt my humanity; I was ſhocked and affected: I ſtept up to the man who guarded them — one of thoſe menial miniſters of Juſtice, who generally ſo well repreſent the terrors of it, — aſked him what the debt was, and found it was ſuch a trifle as I could inſtantly diſcharge. Whilſt this affair was adjuſting, the old lady ceaſed from weeping, and ſeemed to obſerve what paſſed with wild wonder and ſurprize; but when I had diſmiſſed the officer, diſperſed the crowd, and offered my ſervice to wait on them to their lodging, a freſh burſt of tears prevented any anſwer but a low curteſy.

Now, firſt, I had a ſight of the face of the young woman, who, whilſt ſhe curteſied with modeſt gratitude, lifted up

the

the ſweeteſt eyes that ever melted hearts; joy, ſurprize, and earneſt acknowledgment glowed through the ſhining ſuffuſion of tears. You may be ſure my curioſity was now ſufficiently excited. When we came to the door, I addreſſed myſelf to the elder lady, and reſpectfully begged to know in what manner I could be of any ſervice to her; ſhe anſwered, with a faltring voice, that ſhe was aſhamed of her inability to expreſs the deep ſenſe ſhe had of the great ſervice I had already done her; but that if I could condeſcend to enter ſo mean an apartment, ſhe wiſhed I would ſtay 'till her gratitude could find utterance. I replied, that what I had done was a trifle not to be mentioned; but if ſhe would point out the method, it would be a great pleaſure to me to merit her favourable opinion; and ſo I entered her room, which indeed was very ſmall, and poorly furniſhed. When we were ſeated, the good lady began to pour forth from her grate-

ful heart a profuſion of acknowledgments; in which the daughter ſignified her concurrence, by bowing at the cloſe of every ſentence, but without ſpeaking a word; which indeed was perfectly unneceſſary, for her ardent eyes, her glowing cheeks, and all her lovely animated face ſpoke ſo pathetically as to touch my inmoſt ſoul: I endeavoured to interrupt a diſcourſe which gave me great uneaſineſs, by telling the old lady that I believed I had ſeen her at the baths, and feared ſhe attended them through a ſad neceſſity, begging to know the nature of her illneſs, and what advice ſhe had had. You leave my heart too full, anſwered ſhe; but I had rather ſuffer that pain, than perſiſt in giving you any: as to your kind enquiries, Sir, my complaints were many, but the chief was an inveterate rheumatiſm, which often attacked my head and ſtomach, and left me no hope of eaſe but from the uſe of theſe baths; but this is a remedy too expenſive

penſive for perſons in my circumſtances; and therefore I ſuffered myſelf to be reduced to the laſt extremity, before I had recourſe to it; and you have ſeen, Sir, with generous compaſſion, the ſad conſequence of my raſh attempt: I wiſh I had ſtayed at home, and patiently expected the only effectual relief for all my ſufferings, which ſurely could not have been deferred much longer. I cannot (continued ſhe) look back, without affrightment and horror, at the diſmal condition into which I was going to be plunged, and in which my poor dear child muſt have been involved, had not you, like a pitying angel, ſnatched us out of the very jaws of ruin. I begged ſhe would endeavour to forget what was paſt, and look forward with more hope; and ſaid, I ſhould think it a duty, the performance of which is its own reward, ſince heaven had brought me acquainted with her difficulties, to do all in my power to aſſiſt her; that I could not help

fearing ſhe had wanted the advice of a phyſician. She ſaid, indeed ſhe could by no means afford to employ one: — I deſired ſhe would give me leave to ſend her mine, who was ſo worthy a man, that I was ſure he would take as much pleaſure as I did, in ſerving her. She thanked me, but ſaid it was not neceſſary, as ſhe was already greatly recovered; and ſhe believed her apothecary very well underſtood her caſe: I enquired who he was, and ſoon after, taking my leave, having obtained permiſſion to wait on them again, I went to him to learn what I could concerning theſe ladies, whoſe diſtreſs ſeemed the more pitiable, as by their converſation, and behaviour, one could not help believing they had enjoyed better fortune: he told me he knew nothing of their ſtory; but the elder lady —— (whoſe name I will call EUGENIA—) appeared to be a woman of ſenſe and worth: that ſhe had ſuffered a great deal in her health; and he feared

her

her mind, as well as body, had its ſhare of uneaſineſs; for they ſeemed to be in very low circumſtances, and had often begged him to be more ſparing of his trouble, as it was not in their power to reward him as they wiſhed: —— that the daughter was a ſweet modeſt young creature, to her mother a moſt dutiful and affectionate child, an aſſiduous ſervant, and a moſt tender nurſe: that ſhe had often borrowed books of him to read to her mother in her confinement; for her diſtemper being thrown out into the extremities, ſhe had been helpleſs for above a fortnight; in which time they had ſeen nobody but himſelf and their landlady, who now and then looked in upon them, but with no great kindneſs in her manner. I deſired him to call upon them immediately, and deliver a bank-bill which I gave him, and the next day I waited upon them. O, Sir, (cried the good lady) am I never to ſee you without ſuch violent emotion —— your goodneſs will

deſtroy me! — God forbid (interrupted I) that I ſhould miſs my aim ſo far! but do not you, dear Madam, counteract me; do not hurt yourſelf; if you muſt expreſs ſo much gratitude for ſuch ſmall benefits, do it in ſparing me all the pain you can, and be aſſured I cannot ſee you uneaſy without it: I have heard of your patient ſufferings, but now you do not exert your uſual equanimity: let me aſk, if you was in my ſituation, and I in yours, don't you think you would do, at leaſt, as I do? — The young lady turned towards the window, and haſtily pulled out her handkerchief; and her mother cried, O, Sir! and I am ſure you would then do as we do, all but adore the benevolent heart that ſhewed ſuch divine compaſſion on the fatherleſs and friendleſs! — friendleſs did I ſay? I wronged your goodneſs! — That's right, Madam, look upon me as your friend, and let me have the honour of calling you mine, and then we ſhall have a mutual claim to the aſſiſtance of each other. ——

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS

(*interrupting him.*)

My own CALLISTUS! let me embrace my deareſt friend! I have him all — all *my* CALLISTUS! my generous, humane —

CALLISTUS

(*interrupting.*)

O, DO not praiſe me, SOPHRONIUS! I am condemning myſelf; this gleam of light will only add more horror to the utter darkneſs.

I CULTIVATED my new-made friendſhip by daily viſits; and when we began to be a little more familiar, I enquired into the particulars of EUGENIA's paſt life: ſhe told me ſhe was the daughter of a country gentleman, contrary to whoſe inclinations ſhe was married very early in life to an officer in the army, who had no other income than his pay: though a mutual paſſion was the foundation of their union, their happineſs had been of very ſhort dura-

tion: he proved an unprincipled rake; waſted all her fortune in his intemperate pleaſures; and treated his unhappy wife, firſt with neglect, and afterwards with cruelty. His exceſſes introduced painful diſtempers, which brought him to an untimely end; and EUGENIA was left a widow with a ſon and daughter, and no proviſion but her penſion. — Her ſon was happily provided for in the navy, and was at that time ſtationed abroad; the daughter, who could not be prevailed on to leave her mother alone in a very ill ſtate of health, lived with her in an obſcure village, and helped to ſupport her by her needle: poor EUGENIA's bodily ſufferings increaſing to an intolerable degree, forced her to ſeek relief in this place, where ſhe was ſoon reduced to the diſtreſs in which I found her; a diſtreſs which had impreſſed her mind with peculiar horror. — 'The idea of being caſt into a gaol,' ſaid ſhe, 'after all my paſt ſufferings, 'with all my preſent infirmities, had

'over-

'overpowered my patience!——You would not have ſeen me weep, had I not heard my poor child's ſobs — my heart was abandoned to ſullen deſpair ——Alas, dear maid! thy hapleſs mother's life is a burden inſtead of a ſupport to thy youth! would I could lay it down, and relieve myſelf and you! —but let me not be impatient! let me not be unthankful to that pitying power who ſent you to my reſcue!— No—I am content to live, to expreſs my gratitude to my generous benefactor; to renew my daily ardent prayers!'——Here ſhe ſtopped — ſhe claſped her hands, and cloſed her eyes, for a few moments, whilſt the tears trickled faſter down her cheeks, —— I could not reſtrain mine.

SOPHRONIUS.

I KNOW the tenderneſs of your heart, dear Sir, and what it muſt have felt on ſuch an occaſion.

CALLISTUS.

CRUEL, cruel, heart! which could melt at the ſtory of her paſt woes, and then plunge her into new depths of miſery, compared to which, her former ſufferings were trifles — O what can expiate my guilt? O that I could live longer! that I could now ſuffer more ten thouſand times! — if all would do! ——

— !

SOPHRONIUS.

ALL that we *can* do, *will* do, added to our Saviour's ſatisfactory ſufferings; the will alone, when it is (as here, ſurely, it is) ſincere, will be accepted, though the power be denied.

CALLISTUS.

O GOD, thou knoweſt it is! — O that what is done could be undone! that I could call them back to life! that I might ſurrender up to them all my poſſeſſions, all myſelf, to be puniſhed and tormented

at

at their diſcretion: alas! their power of hurting me, could not be equal to the injuries I did them!

SOPHRONIUS.

DEAR CALLISTUS, do not torture yourſelf and me, by this cruel ſuſpenſe; if it muſt be, defer no longer to diſcloſe the dreadful ſcene.

CALLISTUS.

BEAR with me, my friend! — I will, if I can, go on; but how can I go on, without ſtopping ſometimes to give vent to my full heart, which elſe would burſt?

THINK that I have been acquainted with the diſtreſſed ladies about a fortnight; think that the daughter is ſomewhat familiarized to the ſight of me; for having never converſed, ſince ſhe was twelve years old, with a man of any figure, ſhe ſeemed at firſt to be awed by my appearance: ſhe ſpeaks —— ſhe mixes a little in the converſation — think

— O no, you cannot imagine to yourſelf the aſtoniſhing charms both of mind and body which ſhe diſplays in ſpeaking; her dark blue eyes, which before were all ſoftneſs, ſweetneſs, and modeſty, now ſparkle with intelligence and ſenſibility, and her whole delicate perſon aſſumes an animated air — Alas! I am ſpeaking of her, as if ſhe ſtill exiſted! — ay, ſo ſhe does in heaven — but I muſt never more be bleſt with a ſight of her! —— Such ſimplicity — ſuch innocence — ſuch genuine purity of heart, I never before found in woman — With regard to others, ſhe was faultleſs; her credulity, her unſuſpecting confidence, which proved ſo fatal to herſelf, were the natural conſequences of her own integrity, and her ignorance of the world. —— Too ſoon I loved her —— Villain, thou lieſt — thou never lovedſt her —— O heavens, did I not love her? Why then I never loved SOPHRONIUS — I never loved my father, or my mother; for all that I had ever felt

of

of love for all thoſe to whom I owed the greateſt affection — all, all together made not the ſum of what I felt for her! —— And didſt thou love her then? — didſt thou not deceive her? — didſt thou not deſtroy her? —— O how cruelly deſtroy her! — ſtrange — ſtrange! ——

I HAD been at Bath two months, and was tired of it: I had received great benefit from the waters, but perhaps more from my new acquaintance. Pleaſures to which I had long been a ſtranger, ſoothed my ſoftning heart: I had ſome degree of ſatisfaction in myſelf; for as yet I had formed no helliſh plot againſt the excellent MELINDA. I had had the reſolution to leave off one of my bad habits, and I felt the energy of ſome of my old virtuous affections: I had done, I was daily doing, good to worth in diſtreſs: benevolence and generoſity diſdained not to linger in my heart: I felt again that I believed a God; my ſoul overflowed with gratitude to him for the reſtoration

of

of my health; and I even ſeriouſly purpoſed to act, for the future, more agreeably to his divine will. I fancy the uniformly good are not conſcious of the ſweet effects of virtue, even on the body; I mean, not merely by eſcaping the diſorders which are the natural conſequents of ſome vices, but by its own eſſential efficacy:

Sweet are the ſlumbers of the virtuous man.

Sweetly flows the blood which is not agitated by violent paſſions; ſweet, ſerene, and chearful are the ſpirits which are not harraſſed by remorſe: And, O, how is the whole compoſition cheared and animated, by the pleaſurable ſenſations which attend the conſciouſneſs of doing good!

I FOUND that the ladies had been at Bath ſix weeks; and EUGENIA being ſurprizingly recovered, I aſked them one day when they propoſed leaving the place. EUGENIA ſaid they had been deſirous of quitting it ſome time; but that, to

ſay

ſay the truth, they imagined I ſhould remove very ſoon, and they choſe to wait 'till I was gone. I did not well know how to interpret this, and begged an explanation of it. She ſeemed loth to ſay any more; but, as I inſiſted upon knowing the truth, ſhe told me at laſt, that when I was gone, they could get away quietly in their own method; but they feared if they had mentioned going before me, that I ſhould, from my unwearied goodneſs, engage myſelf in ſome new trouble upon their account. I ſmiled, and told them I was glad I had diſcovered their plot, but intended not to let them eſcape ſo eaſily; that I had no thoughts of leaving Bath 'till they did, and hoped ſo to contrive it, as not to give either ſide the pain of parting: there is a good deal of preſuming vanity in that ſpeech (ſaid I); don't you think ſo, Madam? If I had not known you ſo long, Sir, (replied ſhe) I ſhould have thought there had been a reproach couched under that

queſtion,

question, which I am sure we do not deserve, not if we did, could you have meant. — I caught the dear MARINDA's eyes repeating after her mother — Indeed, Sir, I do not deserve to be reproached with ingratitude! — Then, ladies, I have a method to propose to you of overpaying at once all the mighty debts which your delicate imaginations have so outrageously exaggerated. — O, Sir, (cried the good lady) I could return to the sad place from which your beneficence delivered me, if, by so doing, I could prove my earnest desire of making all the return that is possible, for the obligations you have heaped upon us. — Well, Madam, then the request I have to make to you, is to return with me to a place, which it shall be my business to render as agreeable to you as possible, and that in your own way; your habitation shall be more suited to your humility than to my good will; it shall be entirely your own; nor will I presume to

intrude one moment without your leave. —— Good God, Sir, do you call this a way to pay debts? the very thought overpowers me: no, Sir, I will go back to my cottage, and there, if my diſorders return, I will wait with what patience I can, 'till this

Too, too ſolid maſs ſhall melt:

And with my laſt breath I will pray for bleſſings to be ſhowered on your head, with the ſame unſparing hand with which you adminiſter them to others. — Now, Madam, (returned I) you have mentioned the firſt thing which moves me to perſiſt, with the obſtinacy I ſhall perſiſt, in my requeſt, that you will be in, or near London, that you may be within reach of proper aſſiſtance, if you ſhould have any return of ill health. I have another ſtrong reaſon which regards myſelf; I do not receive ſo much ſatisfaction in the converſation of any of my friends, as in that of my new ones; then how can

I bear the thoughts of losing it? Alas, Sir, (replied EUGENIA) I fear it is time we should lose the pleasure of yours; for though it is impossible for me to think ill of a man whose words and actions, whose countenance, and whole behaviour so loudly proclaim his honour, his humanity, and goodness; I have not lived so long out of the world as not to apprehend that the honours you have already done us, will be taken notice of in a manner injurious both to us and you. I answered, that indeed I feared her reflections on the world were but too just; but that she seemed to have little reason to pay any regard to it; and I would take upon me to defend her from any ill effects of its malice; and would even be cautious of exciting envy, the chief source of ill-will; from this consideration partly it was, that I proposed London, if it would agree with her, — and I was inclined to think that in the winter it might be better than the colder, damper air of

the country — as there I might have the honour of seeing them sometimes, if they would give me leave, without its being taken notice of. —— MELINDA bowed, looked up, and sighed, (I doubt not from the swellings of her grateful heart) and EUGENIA replied, that they were beyond expression obliged to me for all that I had done, and proposed to do, to promote their happiness; but it was not necessary they should be so happy; and as Providence had not given them the means of being so, she could not think of receiving them from any other hands. Dear Madam, (returned I) consider what you say.—To Providence only you are obliged for all the good you have ever received, or can receive; but is it for us to prescribe the means it shall take to convey to us its blessings? I was sent to succour you in your greatest distress; and he who before had given me the means, then gave me the will to do it; and was I ordered to stop there? so far from it,

that I look upon myſelf as your appointed guardian and truſtee, and think myſelf bound to be careful of your intereſt, and tender of your happineſs.—O heavens! all this muſt appear againſt me at the great day, when I muſt give an account of my ſtewardſhip! What account can I give? O ſhame! O horrible confuſion! what an account I muſt give! What ſhame—what confuſion muſt that be, when even now—to you—my partial friend——I had rather die than expoſe my cruel treachery—Hold heart, and do not burſt, 'till I have performed my penance!——

After much perſuaſion, I prevailed at laſt upon the poor imprudent lady to go to town for a month only, and try whether it would be agreeable to them or not. It was concluded that I ſhould ſet out before them. In this interval I had time to conſider coolly what I had done, and what I had to do; I had conceived the moſt violent paſſion for the

ſweet innocent MELINDA; and the queſtion was in what manner it was to be gratified: ſhe was by nature of a ſoft, tender, affectionate diſpoſition, formed for love; I had engaged her gratitude and eſteem, and I did not doubt of my ſucceſs in inſpiring her with an equal paſſion: — but what then? — I knew her real purity, her rooted piety too well, not to be certain that there were only three poſſible ways of gaining the poſſeſſion of her, — the legal, — forcible, — or fraudulent: my pride and vanity ſtarted at the thoughts of the firſt; the ſecond I never in my life could think of; and the laſt my honour bluſhed at: not to mention the ſtruggles of my conſcience, which I had long been accuſtomed to ſubdue. — Now might I too have had my URANIA; but thoſe haughty idols to whom I ſacrificed my youthful innocence, my real happineſs, all my firſt principles of virtue and religion, frowned, and I dared not diſobey them. My generoſity, my ho-

nour, my paſt kindneſſes, and my love, pleaded on behalf of the innocent victim. —— Now, I was again racked with contending paſſions; the Dæmon reſumed his ſway, and inſtantly I felt the fiery laſh. — Had it not been for my vanity, I ſhould at once have reconciled my honour with my love, and married the virtuous amiable MELINDA. —— What if I only ſeem to marry her? That, if it can be rightly managed, will ſatisfy her as well: ſhe ſhall live ſtill with her mother; and then the conſtraints we muſt ſubmit to, in order to ſave appearances, will preſerve all the ardour of an amour; I ſhall love her for ever, without fear of the fatal conſequences of ſecurity and unſought-for opportunity. Here I fixed: — the expedient ſerved to deceive myſelf; and now all my thoughts were turned upon the execution.

THINK that the ladies are now ſettled in their new habitation; a ſmall houſe in the ſkirts of the town, with one maid-

ſervant and a boy, the utmoſt I could prevail on them to accept: they live as much, if not more retired, than they did in the country; I am their only companion, and therefore I exert all my powers to be as pleaſing to them as poſſible; I ſpend ſeveral hours there almoſt every day; I ſupply them with books of entertainment, and often read to them myſelf. But, to make a little more variety, and at the ſame time to facilitate my grand ſcheme, I ſoon introduced a new acquaintance. They had given me leave to wait on them to two or three plays, and an opera, ſcenes entirely new to the charming MELINDA, who ſhewed a natural taſte for every thing which was excellent, and I perceived was extremely delighted with the muſic; I ſuppoſe ſhe had never before heard any that was tolerable; though I afterwards diſcovered that ſhe had herſelf the ſweeteſt voice I ever heard, and an ear of exquiſite exactneſs. From hence I took

my hint. I had a young man in my ſervice who had been a choriſter at Oxford; he had ſprightly parts, an agreeable voice, and ſome ſkill upon the harpſichord. —— Poor wretch, where art thou now? Would I could recall thee, not only to thy native country, but to thy native innocence! But it is I that muſt anſwer for thy ſins! O, SOPHRONIUS, my good friend, would you could meet with him, and reclaim him; he has ſenſe, and therefore may reform; and I believe had no bad nature, 'till my example led him aſtray: after the ſad event I am ſoon to relate, I could not bear the ſight of him, and therefore ſent him with a friend abroad, with a promiſe never to forget him, when he wanted my aſſiſtance; I have remember'd him in my Will, that poverty might not tempt him to more wickedneſs: you will ſee him upon this account; and would to God your goodneſs may have the effect, which I doubt not it will aim at, for my ſake, as well as his.

—I must remind you, that I was not an useless member of our musical club at Oxford; and when I was abroad, to amuse my melancholy, I practised under some of the best masters.—Now, one day, after I had been at the opera with my two ladies; upon their expressing the pleasure I had procured them, I said, if they would give me leave to introduce a worthy young clergyman of my acquaintance, who played and sung very agreeably, I could accompany him on the violin, and we could give them a little music at home. They gratefully accepted the proposal. Thus was the young man I mentioned cloathed in robes little suiting his character, and gave great satisfaction to the unsuspecting ladies, not only by his voice and performance, but by his modest conversation and behaviour.

More than two months were now elapsed, and I no longer doubted that my sweet Melinda's heart was my own,

when EUGENIA began to mention her return into the country. I ſeized this opportunity of trying the ſucceſs of my project. I told her ſhe gave me great pain, by returning to this melancholy ſubject; but as I feared ſhe was ſerious, ſhe obliged me abruptly to make one propoſal more for preventing our ſeparation, which had indeed been long in my thoughts, but which, for the reaſons ſhe would preſently perceive, I ſhould not have dared even now to mention, if the dread of a parting, which I could not bear, did not oblige me to hazard every thing to prevent it: that I was now going to put it in their power to make me (even in their own opinions) very much their debtor; but that I bluſhed to propoſe the means, as I muſt at the ſame time propoſe terms, which perhaps, after all, might be harder for me to ſubmit to, than themſelves. I pauſed a little, but the attention of my audience was too deeply ingaged to ſuffer them to interrupt me.

EUGENIA's

EUGENIA's eyes were fixed upon me, and in them I thought I read ſuſpenſe, ſurprize, and hope, mixt with fear. MELINDA's eyes were fixt upon the ground, but the deep bluſh that overſpread her face, indicated a conſciouſneſs that ſhe was particularly intereſted in the event. —I proceeded—I am of a wealthy powerful family, which is by no means exempt from pride, the uſual attendant upon power and riches. Upon my father's death, I inherited a very ample fortune; but my relations have ſet their hearts upon ſeeing that fortune ſtill greatly aggrandized: I doubt not but ſome of them mean to contribute largely to this their own ſcheme, but it is upon terms I can never ſubmit to; they have more than once already almoſt irreconcileably quarrelled with me for rejecting grand alliances of their propoſing; but I could not reſolve to ſacrifice my inclinations to my ambition; and I never had ſeen the lady with whom I thought I could

be

be happy in marriage, 'till Providence bleſſed me with the acquaintance of the moſt amiable MELINDA.—I bowed, and pauſed again; whilſt the ſweet creature half lifted up her trembling eyes, and gently inclined her head: the mother ſtill was ſilent.—Though I could not, (continued I) ſacrifice all my peace and happineſs to the pride of my family, I could, I think, give up ſome external circumſtances, which are in truth not eſſentially neceſſary, rather than ſhock their vanity, and forfeit all their good will and friendſhip; and could I flatter myſelf that you, deareſt Madam, (addreſſing myſelf to MELINDA) could think my hand and heart, without my ſtate and grandeur, an offer not unworthy of your excellence; and that you, Madam (to EUGENIA) could conſent to give me your amiable daughter upon ſuch conditions, I would proceed.—I pauſed for a reply, but received none for ſome moments. The lovely innocent trembled

all

all over; her heart beat violently, and a crimſon bluſh overſpread her face and boſom: EUGENIA bluſhed too; but at length, with gliſtning eyes, Pardon me, Sir, ſaid ſhe, that my confuſion and gratitude have kept me ſo long ſilent. I cannot *now* expreſs half the meaning of my heart: your manner leaves me no room to doubt of your ſerioufneſs; but I imagine you have not duly conſidered of what you have been ſaying; and therefore beg that before another word is added, you will retire, and do yourſelf that juſtice; and then I doubt not but you will ſee that you have mentioned a thing which would be vaſtly too great an honour for you to offer, or for us to receive. I replied, that I had long before maturely conſidered it, and ſhould long ago have made the ſame propoſals, but that I was deterred by the ſhame of offering terms ſo unworthy the merit, the excellence of the beautiful MELINDA, which

which was ſuch as would add luſtre to a throne.

But not to lengthen a ſcene, the event of which only is of importance, ſuffice it to ſay that the iſſue was perfectly agreeable to my wiſhes. When I found that I had Eugenia's conſent, I addreſſed myſelf to the bluſhing, trembling Melinda, and taking her cold hand in both mine — but the moſt important queſtion of all, (ſaid I) is ſtill to be determined. — What ſays the ſweet Melinda, can ſhe love her Calliſtus? — does ſhe love him? — if ſhe does, I hope ſhe will not be aſhamed to own it — If ſhe cannot — There I ſtopped; and the gentle maid, overcome with confuſion, gratitude, and tenderneſs, let her head drop upon my ſhoulder; I claſped her in my arms, and preſſed her cloſe to my throbbing heart: in this poſture we continued ſilent for ſome moments, 'till upon her making an effort to diſengage herſelf, — I ſaid, There is a kind conſenting in your eyes

and manner; but, if it is ſo, as I would interpret it, ſhall I not have the joy of hearing it from your own lips? With looks alternately lifted up, and dejected, ſhe anſwered — Indeed, Sir, I know not how to call what I feel for you, or how to diſtinguiſh gratitude from love. If have ever felt for my dear mother the fondeſt affection, the juſt return of her tenderneſs; and my ſoul is deeply penetrated with a ſenſe of heaven's unmerited goodneſs; but ſuch warm and lively gratitude as your unexpected kindneſſes to my poor diſtreſſed mother and myſelf excited, I never before experienced: need I ſay, that my moſt earneſt wiſh is to be able to make ſome return to your goodneſs? and need I be aſhamed to own that the thought of contributing to your happineſs is moſt pleaſing to me? —— Dear, delightful ſimplicity! ſweet unaffected modeſty! — how happy I might have been! how happy I was! A whole year I was happy! — O, miſery! — it is gone!

— The

——The moſt perfect purity! the moſt engaging gentleneſs!—all ſoftneſs, ſweetneſs, tenderneſs!—we could have loved one another for ever!—Inſufferable torment! had I been innocent like her, we might have met again——Diſtracting thought! O what a parting! never to meet again!—what a ſcene! Hell can be no worſe!——O, idiot, villain! O ſelfiſh miſer! She gave thee all ſhe could! had ſhe been miſtreſs of a throne, it had been thine; but thy hard-hearted pride demed her a name!—For which that name is blotted out in Heaven!——

SOPHRONIUS! I had forgot that you was by me; I was abſorbed in my wretched ſelf.——O, kind Sir, I muſt wound your honeſt heart! give me your hand—I am almoſt at my journey's end!—nay, now you cannot ſpeak—do not try, for I muſt go on.

ELEVEN months were elapſed ſince our marriage—Marriage, did I ſay? O that we had indeed been married! would

all

all the world had been witneſſes of the ſolemnity, that the curſed thought might never have riſen in my mind!——

MELINDA was now in a ſtate which might have been a ſource of new delights; but I obſerved her ſpirits were dejected, when one day ſhe took my hand, and kiſſing it,—Shall I not (ſaid ſhe) my dear CALLISTUS, die your acknowledged wife? Shall I not have the comfort of leaving a good name behind me? nay, your honourable name to grace my memory? If I am to live, I could be content to live for ever as I have done ſince the happy day that united us; not feel a wiſh for greater ſtate or grandeur: your love, my CALLISTUS, is all that is neceſſary to my happineſs, except my good name: let me live in private ſtill, but let me live in credit: my condition muſt ſoon be known, and then what will the world ſay? if I am not CALLISTUS's wife, then what am I? O, my love, my lord, my huſband, as I have lived with innocence, let me

not die with infamy! If I am now to die, your friends will ſoon be reconciled to you; but if I am to *live*, what have you to fear—or what have you more to wiſh? —Well, you know beſt, but it ſeems ſtrange to me! —Were I a Queen—— O that my CALLISTUS had as humble a mind as his MELINDA! —But you will own me. —— Yes, ever, (anſwered I) as my deareſt, ſweeteſt love; and I will love you for ever with the ſame tender paſſion. But will you not own me for your wife? You *are* my love, my miſtreſs, and my wife: Heaven heard our mutual vows, and has recorded them. —— Heaven bleſs the lips that uttered, and the heart that dictated thoſe charming words! — and will you ſay the ſame in public? will you tell the world that poor MELINDA is your wife! —What cruel fiend drove me on to my ruin! I anſwered — Alas, my love, ſuch is the folly of the world, that they would not be ſatisfied with ſo ſacred a union

as

as ours; the leaſt omiſſion in form, is of more conſequence in their abſurd opinion, than the want of eſteem, mutual affection, and all other eſſential circumſtances of a real union.——What means my CALLISTUS? what omiſſion do you talk of? cried the aſtoniſhed innocent — Now is the time (thought I) to ſettle every thing upon its proper footing; the occaſion happily preſents itſelf; but three words more, and all is over; it is too late to think of parting now; I will ſettle upon her a fortune beyond her utmoſt wiſhes; and when ſhe reflects how happy ſhe has been, how fond I am, and that nothing is wanting but an empty name, ſhe will eaſily be reconciled to her condition; and therefore thus I anſwered her: — ſenſeleſs villain as I was! — You muſt know then, my love, that I feared from the prejudices of education, and that ſo private and confined a one, that you would not have been contented to be happy but in the way of the world; that

well as you loved me, you would not have chosen to quit the common road to follow me, though my way led to Elysium; the common way was impracticable to me; must I then stop short in the pursuit of happiness, to which I likewise meant to conduct my MELINDA! It would have been egregious folly to have done so! I therefore sought for a bye-way to that mansion of felicity with which we both seem to be contented: I cloathed my own valet-de-chambre in the formal garb, and he, as well as the best of them, repeated to us the old dull story, little suited to the ardent tenderness of a love like mine: and have we not been exquisitely happy? are we not—Full of my cursed self, and wholly intent upon my execrable scheme, I observed not the signs which I suppose must have foreboded the fate that followed—whilst I spoke the last words, both being standing, she fell back so suddenly and violently, that I could not catch her, before

that

that lovely form was daſhed againſt the ground: I found her motionleſs, and, as it ſeemed to me, breathleſs —— I cried aloud for help for *her*, and vengeance on myſelf. —— Her mother, firſt alarmed, found us both on the floor; her daughter, to all appearance, dead, and me on my knees, by her ſide, ſometimes kiſſing her pale face, — with horror ſure in my own, — ſometimes beating my own head and breaſt in diſtracting agonies of fury and deſpair. I know not exactly what I ſaid or did in thoſe dreadful moments, but believe I accuſed myſelf in terms of ſhocking deſperation, to the wretched mother, as the murderer of her daughter; and in broken ſentences, as my paſſion gave them utterance, diſcloſed the whole villainous proceeding: this I rather ſuppoſe from what followed, than exactly know; for — O heavens! what a condition was I in! Words cannot paint, nor thought conceive the agonizing horrors, the heart-rending paſſions

of ſorrow, pity, remorſe, and deſpair that I endured, when after a long ſwoon, ſhe revived only to fall into violent convulſions, which having almoſt disjointed every limb, and diſtorted every feature — killed her, SOPHRONIUS! — O horrid, horrid ideas! — dreadful! — ſhocking! — diſtracting thoughts! — I cannot bear it — oh! I ſhall run mad! — SOPHRONIUS, ſpeak to me — call me off. ——

SOPHRONIUS.

O, CALLISTUS — O, Sir ——

CALLISTUS.

O NO — you will not ſpeak to me, you will not look on me, I knew you would not — Wretch, wretch, miſerable wretch! even SOPHRONIUS has abandoned thee!

SOPHRONIUS.

SIR — Sir — hear me ſpeak ——

CALLISTUS.

HOLD, SOPHRONIUS! do not *you* curſe me! execrable wretch though I am, do not

not *you* doom me to deſtruction! I loved *you*, Sir — whilſt I was myſelf, I loved you as myſelf! even now I love you — O SOPHRONIUS, SOPHRONIUS, dearly do I love you! ——

SOPHRONIUS.

STOP, ſtop, Sir — on my knees, I beg you ſtop — and do not break my heart!

CALLISTUS.

I AM very fooliſh, I believe. —— riſe, deareſt friend, or pull me down to you. —— I am quite a child in weakneſs and folly — SOPHRONIUS — I am very faint — my friend — if you would have me live — give me ſomething quick ——

SOPHRONIUS.

HERE, my dear Sir — ſignify to me by a ſign when you are better, but do not peak. ——

CALLISTUS.

I AM better. — O, Sir, you would not wonder at theſe weakneſſes, if you knew what paſſed within! ——

SOPHRONIUS.

THANK GOD you are better!

CALLISTUS.

O, SOPHRONIUS, pray that my ſoul may live, if it be poſſible; but loſe not a thought on this wretched body; which ſoon, very ſoon, muſt return to its native earth. But, O my ſoul! what will become of thee!

SOPHRONIUS.

DEAR Sir, recollect the comfortable aſſurances you entertained laſt night; to which your preſent ſufferings ought juſtly to add ſtrength.

CALLISTUS.

AND is it ſo, SOPHRONIUS? come then, I have more horrors ſtill in ſtore, more ſufferings ſtill — grant me but ſtrength to bear!

SOPHRONIUS.

BUT, my deareſt friend ——

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

No, SOPHRONIUS, if my preſent ſufferings can avail in any degree to expiate my paſt crimes, ſure you would not wiſh to deprive me of a moment's pain. Come, poor EUGENIA, do thou aſſiſt to torture me! This is the only dreadful ſervice thou oweſt me: but, perhaps, thou canſt now forgive the unutterable wrongs I did thee, and pity the wretch who once could pity thee: how I pitied thee! even when madneſs brought thee a horrible relief; ſurely I have been diſtracted too, but, oh! only ſo much as to add to my horrors! to preſent thy dreadful image to my trembling ſoul; in one pale hand, thy bleeding ſon, and in the other, thy ſweet —— Oh! that is too much to feel and live; I muſt be taken off that rack! —— Yes, SOPHRONIUS, the poor EUGENIA, whom I releaſed from common calamities, I plunged into ſuch exquiſite diſtreſs, as her nature could not bear;

her

her reaſon, when it could no longer ſerve her, kindly forſook her — ſhe died raving mad, in a private hoſpital to which I had conveyed her.—O that all the world could hear me! O that every heedleſs youth could feel for an inſtant, in the midſt of his pleaſures, what I feel now! —ſurely, ſurely, he could ſin no more!—

But I muſt haſten to a concluſion. My ſand ſinks apace, and I think I ſhall not live beyond this glaſs.

There, Sophronius, read that, and then throw it into the fire.

SOPHRONIUS

(*reading.*)

'Sir, If you have any thing of the 'gentleman, or the man left, come and 'give me the only ſatisfaction that I can 'receive for the enormous wrongs you 'have done me: meet me on this day 'ſe'nnight at Calais; and I will either 'begin your puniſhment, or you ſhall 'add my death to your damnation. My

'poor

'poor mother, my ſweet ſiſter, ſummon
'you to judgment. Your conſcience
'will inform you whom you have made
'the moſt wretched of mankind.'

'P. S. My duty confines me at pre-
'ſent near the place I have named, which
'I ſuppoſe may be a convenient one to
'whichever of us ſurvives.'

CALLISTUS.

O, SOPHRONIUS, ſuch cowards can guilt make us, that my very ſoul trembled as I read it. But I could not conceive for ſome time how the poor young man became acquainted with his miſery, 'till I recollected that two days after the divine MELINDA quitted the ſociety of a fiend, for that of angels, I was informed that their foot-boy had abſented himſelf ſuddenly, and that he had not been heard of ſince; which in my diſtracted condition I had never before reflected on; but now it appeared that the wretched

ed EUGENIA had ſent him to ſummon her ſon to revenge his ſiſter and herſelf.

I KNEW not what to do; I dreaded the thought of adding to my load of guilt, but more I dreaded death; and I doubted not but if I refuſed to meet him, he would purſue me through the world: nor was the fear of ſhame, amidſt ſo many greater terrors, wanting to increaſe my tortures. Sometimes I determined to go and preſent my naked boſom to his revengeful ſword, but, oh! the dread of what was to come after, ſoon frighted me back to life: life was become a ſtate of unutterable torment, and yet I durſt not die.

I SET out with a heart torn with innumerable conflicts; but reſolved, if poſſible, to avoid being guilty of the death of an innocent, much injured, and moſt unhappy young gentleman. Alas! was it to make him any ſatisfaction for the outrageous wrongs, the baſe treachery, the inhuman cruelty I had been guilty of

to

to his excellent sister, for the dishonour of his family, and the exquisite sorrows, the irreparable losses I had brought upon him, to give him a chance of depriving me of life at the equal hazard of his own? had he seized me unarmed, and stabbed me in a thousand places, had he tortured me with the most ingenious studied cruelty, the punishment could not have been equal to my crimes, the vengeance had been wholely inadequate to his wrongs.

O, SOPHRONIUS, how was my soul shocked, when my eyes met my MELINDA's face, only the features strengthned into manly beauty! O, lovely youth, how much rather would I have given thee my heart, my estate, nay, my *life*, than have made the least attempt upon thine; but that the dread of appearing, loaded as I was with guilt and shame, before the almighty, all-seeing Judge, was too horribly strong for every other consideration.

THE moment I made myſelf known to him, his eyes lightned with rage, and he bid me name a time and place convenient for our meeting. I was going to expreſs ſomething of what I felt; but he ſtopped me ſhort, by telling me he would hold no converſe with me, but what was neceſſary for our purpoſe.

O GREAT GOD, what did I feel when I returned to my room! It is in vain to endeavour to explain to you the complication of miſeries and horrors! what a night I paſſed! not one inſtant did I cloſe my eyes, 'till the dreadful morn aroſe: — O, SOPHRONIUS, think what it was; and all the conſequence of my own folly, vanity, and villany! ——

AT length we met upon the fatal field; my impatient foe was there before me: the inſtant I approached he drew his ſword, and prepared to attack me; I drew not mine, but ſaid, Sir, this is no ſatisfaction for the calamities I have occaſioned, though wholely blind to the dreadful

dreadful conſequences; ſurely I feel them ſharper than yourſelf! — ſhare with me my eſtate, or take it all, and I will only ſhare your ſorrows.

HARDLY had he patience to hear thus much, when he cried aloud — with fury flaſhing from his eyes, O, villain, coward, execrable wretch, and wouldſt thou bribe my juſtice! wouldſt thou buy off my revenge? Draw, or this inſtant will I plunge thy trembling ſoul to hell.

MY ſoul indeed trembled at his impetuous threat, and I durſt not open my boſom to his thruſt. I defended myſelf 'till I had diſarmed him. Now (cried I) I have ſomething more to offer; I give you your life, a large eſtate, my utmoſt ſervices, — my tendereſt friendſhip, would you deign to accept it; live, Sir, and be my brother.

I WAS going to ſheath my ſword, when he darted ſuddenly to his, which had fled out of his hand to a conſiderable diſtance, and which I had left there, and

ſnatching it up, he flew to me again, and cried, — my cauſe admits no points of ceremony; — my wretched mother cries for vengeance, my murdered ſiſter calls for juſtice, — again defend yourſelf, or die. — Then ruſhing furiouſly towards me, he ran upon my guard, and inſtantly fell dead at my feet. — I ſtood ſome moments ſtunned with horror, my ſoul and my ſenſes were all in confuſion; for a moment I knew not where I was, or what I had been doing: a ſhort oblivion gave me the only moment's eaſe from inſufferable anguiſh, that I had felt for a month; and, oh! the only one I have enjoyed ever ſince, 'till my SOPHRONIUS deigned to bring me comfort. — Soon, too ſoon, did I wake from the ſhort trance, to torment which only a wretch guilty as myſelf, if there is on earth ſuch another wretch, can have any idea of! — My eyes recovered their faculty to ſee the ſon of EUGENIA, the brother of MELINDA, weltring in his blood, pale

and

and breathless at my feet — the loveliest youth that ever those wretched eyes beheld, cut off in his bloom by my murderous hands — I dash'd myself on the ground in an agony of despair — dreadful ideas! — horrible recollections! — unutterable misery! — it is not to be borne! — Pity me, SOPHRONIUS! — indeed I suffer strangely — my heart — my head — are both in agonies — my brain's on fire — my heart's convuls'd — it bursts, it bursts ——

SOPHRONIUS.

O CALLISTUS, stop — compose yourself, dear Sir; — alas, you will destroy yourself — say no more at present, Sir, — but let me recollect myself a moment — and I have much to say to you ——

CALLISTUS

(*raving.*)

HUSH — are you mad? — what's all this hurry? — for God's sake what's

the matter? — ſtay — I wanted to ſay ſomething — but you hurry me ſo — O, it was only this — You muſt know that once I killed an Angel — a ſweet Angel ſhe was! — and I murdered a poor mad wretch — but that was in pity — for it was a ſad ſight — O, moſt miſerable! — She too was happy once — but ſhe ran mad with ſorrow — and ſo I killed her — Yes, Sir, and theſe ſame hands (for all they look ſo pale now) were bathed in the blood of her fooliſh boy —— He was handſome; but what of that? had he not been like his ſiſter, I ſhould not have minded it —— Oh, where is my MELINDA!

SOPHRONIUS.

O HEAVENS, how he raves! what ſhall I do! if I call for help, I expoſe him, and perhaps it may go off — ſomething like this has paſſed before. —— How are you, dear Sir? I hope my dear CALLISTUS feels himſelf better.

CALLIS-

CALLISTUS.

I DON'T know, Sir — it might have been better — but it is paſt — what ſignifies this buſtle now? — what would you have! what's done, cannot be undone — ſo don't look ſo ſtern — but pray, who are you, Sir, that you dare to arraign my actions! — Beſides, 'tis falſe, I never killed LUCINDA — ſhe's alive ſtill — Ah! what have I done! LUCINDA! ah poor, poor LUCINDA! I have fixed her on the rack for years! Oh, take her down, and put me in her place! — O pitiful — my heart bleeds for her! — Hark! — O Heavens! — a hundred voices cry for judgment on me! — it is pronounced — already, I'm in torment — they tear me — O inhuman — I did not intend it — I meant but to be happy — I only ſought for pleaſure — O inexorable! — cruel dogs — I cannot bear it — they tear me limb from limb —

SOPHRONIUS.

O GRACIOUS GOD, have mercy on him! — O dreadful — now I *muſt* call for help — who's there! help — help —

The wretched CALLISTUS, *in ſtrong convulſions, was conveyed with difficulty to his bed, where his amazing ſufferings ſoon put an end to his life.*

SUCH was the end of a man on whom Providence had beſtowed every bleſſing which can contribute to the felicity of a human creature; all which he wilfully perverted to his deſtruction, by yielding to the temptations of Vanity and Senſuality.

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS;

OR, THE

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

DIALOGUE III.

O præclarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cœtumque proficiscar! cumque ex hac turba et colluvione discedam!

CICERON. DE SENECT.

SOPHRONIUS;

DIALOGUE III.

OR, THE

SOPHRONIUS, URANIA.

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

Thus Sons and Daughter

DIALOGUE III.

INTRODUCTION.

SOPHRONIUS, [illegible] conciliam [illegible] tuum [illegible] et colluvione discedam!

CICERON, DE SENECT.

DIALOGUE III.

SOPHRONIUS. URANIA. Their Sons and DAUGHTER.

INTRODUCTION.

SOPHRONIUS, (with whom the Reader is already acquainted) after he had performed the laſt ſad duties to his departed friend, the wretched CALLISTUS, and, as executor, ſettled his affairs, returned with impatience to his rural retirement, the ſeat of peace, of love, and chearfulneſs.

Though his mind was depressed with sadness, when first he left that shocking scene of horrors, which memory perpetually represented to his fancy; yet in proportion as he advanced on his way, and approached his own delightful home, new ideas flowed in apace; and URANIA, the admirable URANIA, his lovely children, his elegant garden, and a thousand other sweet domestic circumstances, filled his imagination. What pleasing sensations did he experience, when he arrived at the village! None but those who can at least conceive such excellence as his, can imagine the effects of it: the honest farmers and countrymen lining the way, with countenances animated with joy and respect, gave him a sincere welcome; the women blessed him as he passed, with tears of affectionate pleasure in their eyes: heart-felt satisfaction, gratitude, and benevolence, glowed in the benign countenance of SOPHRONIUS. — But who shall express his delightful

rightful emotions when he entered his own gates! — feel them, you who only happy who can feel them, though bought with many a sigh

Fortunatus acquired this extraordinary regard from his neighbours, not only by his personal merits, and amiable qualities, but by the important benefits he procured to the country round him. He introduced considerable improvements in agriculture: by a scheme of his, the river was made navigable thro' all his estate; he set up manufactures; instituted a kind of charity-school in his own house; where, under his own eye, and by his immediate direction, the children of his tenants were taught all that could be useful for them to know: in fine, by præmiums, and encouragements of every kind, he raised such a spirit of industry and ingenuity around him, that the village where he lived, grew to a little town; the value of his estate was immensely increased; and he became

rich without any profeſſion, or apparent buſineſs. Such was his reputation for wiſdom, integrity, and love of his country, that he was choſen member of parliament for a neighbouring borough, without the leaſt application on his part, and even contrary to his inclinations: however, he would not appear regardleſs of the honour done him by his countrymen, nor averſe to the trouble of ſerving them in their own way. After having ſat one parliament, and declared his diſinclination to being re-elected, his eldeſt ſon was accepted in his ſtead.

URANIA was no leſs reſpected and beloved: ſhe too was a great benefactor to the neighbourhood, by her example, her charity, her tenderneſs to the poor in ſickneſs, but particularly by her attention to the education of the female youth. She was too grateful for the eminent advantages ſhe had derived from the care and pains of her excellent father,

father, not to be desirous of communicating the same benefits to others.

SOPHRONIUS and URANIA had the strongest proofs of the important effects of a skilful education in their own family. Four sons, and one daughter, remained to them, at the sad æra I am going to mark.

SEBASTIAN, the eldest son, had been some years in parliament; the second, was already in business at the Bar; THEOPHILUS was in orders, and had a living near SOPHRONIUS; LIONEL, the fourth son, was in the army, and then happened to be quartered in the neighbourhood: the beautiful EMILIA, the only remaining daughter, had been the constant companion, and prime delight of her happy father and mother, for fifteen years. And now, SOPHRONIUS, after having many years enjoyed almost uninterrupted health, with easy circumstances, by his own skill and prudence continually becoming more affluent; the society of a most amiable

woman,

woman, in all reſpects qualified to be the companion and friend of a man of ſenſe and virtue; the dutiful affection of a race of children, who were an honour to their parents, their country, and their ſpecies; the higheſt eſteem and love of many valuable perſons, and the reſpect and regard of all who knew him; — in ſhort, all the real bleſſings which make life deſireable, was ſeized with a violent fever: the inflammation ſoon ſettled on his bowels, and, for the firſt time, he now ſuffered exquiſite bodily pain for two days, and a night.

It chanced that all his children were around him, except the ſecond ſon; and never was a ſcene of more diſtreſs.

Urania, though ſhe generally had reſolution enough to reſtrain her grief, and conceal her own ſufferings, that ſhe might not add to his, was ſometimes obliged to quit the room, and yield to the moſt heart-rending agonies of ſorrow: the gentle Emilia, all ſoftneſs and

tenderneſs,

tenderness, sunk under the complication of misery from the sight of her father's and mother's tortures, and the desolation of all the family; for the very servants seemed to apprehend the loss of an affectionate parent.

In the midst of this distress, Sophronius, who had long remained in silent suffering, called his wife and children around him, and declared himself perfectly easy.

With what affecting transports did this news inspire them! scarce could they support the sudden transition from the most anxious grief, to the liveliest joy. After they had all given vent to their full hearts by various expressions of fond delight, affection, and pious gratitude, Sophronius intimated that he hoped to get some rest; and recommended it to all to seek refreshment, after their great fatigue of spirits.

Sophronius alone was not deceived by the flattering change; he was himself

ſelf perſuaded it was owing to a mortification; but as he was not certain, he would not give an unneceſſary alarm; and beſides, he thought it beſt, however it might prove, that all might have an opportunity of enjoying ſome reſt, before the laſt ſad ſcene was opened. As to himſelf, his ſtrength and ſpirits being quite exhauſted by pain, he ſoon fell into a deep ſleep. When he awaked in the morning, after many hours of ſweet repoſe, he found his phyſician by his bed's ſide, and all the family around him, in ſilent ſuſpenſe: the Doctor had already damped their joy, by the little ſatisfaction he expreſſed at the account they gave him.

SOPHRONIUS ſtill lay quiet for a few minutes, meditating in what manner he might beſt act the ſmall remainder of his part. At length having formed his plan, after greeting them all with a ſerene, but ſolemn air, he called the phyſician to him, and gave him a particular ac-

count of the ſtrange alteration that had happened; and conjured him to tell him plainly, whether his ſuſpicions were not well founded, that this flattering appearance was owing to a fatal cauſe, and that a mortification was proceeding. The good Doctor pauſed a moment, ſighed, looked round on URANIA and her amiable family, who ſtood all fixt in cruel ſuſpenſe, and preſſing SOPHRONIUS's hand, ſaid, —My dear Sir, to you, I could calmly communicate news that—muſt give you joy;—but oh! how ſhall I make known to this poor Lady, and this unhappy circle, that SOPHRONIUS will ſhortly be taken from them.

SOPHRONIUS calmly replied,—I return you a thouſand thanks, good Sir, for your ſincerity, for your humanity, your aſſiduity, and care of me, and my family, on this, and many other occaſions: I wiſh you all the proſperity this world can afford, and a happy change for a better;

better; and ſo, my dear Sir, moſt heartily farewel.

The Doctor, with a profound ſigh, kiſſed his patient's hand, and retired.

Tears now guſhed from every eye with redoubled violence: the wretched Urania could no longer ſuppreſs the tempeſtuous ſobs, which would otherwiſe have burſt her labouring heart: ſhe threw herſelf on her knees at the ſide of the bed, and preſſing her face upon Sophronius's hand, groaned in bitterneſs of ſpirit.

Sophronius now feeling the equanimity he hoped to have preſerved, beginning to forſake him, endeavoured to interrupt the ſolemn ſcene.

SOPHRONIUS.

My deareſt Urania, in pity to yourſelf, —in pity to me, endeavour to recollect yourſelf: I know how hard a taſk I would impoſe, but I know likewiſe your magnanimity; I have obſerved, with the

the highest admiration and gratitude, the effects of it, during my illness; never was there a fitter occasion for its exertion. I wish to end my life with more composure than I now feel; — I wish to spend the small remainder of it, in some manner that might be of use to my family; — but, this affecting scene overpowers my resolution, and confounds my intellects.

URANIA.

FORGIVE me, my SOPHRONIUS — oh, pardon my weakness — I will — if I can — be composed; but, oh! how is it possible! — I am overwhelmed with despair — I have no hope left!

SOPHRONIUS.

WHAT says my dearest life? — has URANIA no hope left? — Alas! I see you cannot yet recollect yourself: indeed 'tis hard — 'tis a strong combat with nature! even I, with heaven within

my view — even I, who have an humble confidence, that in a few hours I ſhall bid adieu to pain and miſery for ever — Even now I ſuffer more than I have yet ſuffered.

URANIA.

O MY life — my beloved SOPHRONIUS — and do I increaſe your ſufferings! ſhall I make your laſt moments bitter! — I will — I will overcome this ſelfiſh weakneſs!

SOPHRONIUS.

O NOBLE URANIA, GOD will aſſiſt you. — Conſider, my dear love, there is no reaſon to lament for me; my body is now eaſy; and my ſoul is going to be delivered out of priſon: conſider that it cannot be long before yours will be freed from its painful confinement. In a few moments I ſhall, I truſt, — through the boundleſs beneficence of my Creator, and the redemption of my Saviour, — enter upon a glorious eternity of happi-

neſs:

neſs; and in a few ſhort days, or years — and what are years, whilſt we contemplate eternity — What are ages but moments! — in a few ſhort moments then, you too, my URANIA, ſhall join me in the bleſſed regions.

URANIA.

'Tis true,—'tis true! — Shall I grieve that my SOPHRONIUS is going to enjoy the reward of all his virtues! — O no! I feel my ſoul expand with the great thought! —— Come, my children, approach, and view your father, who is going to be exalted to the glorious ſtation of an angel.

SOPHRONIUS.

GOD bleſs you all, my dear children, and comfort you! nay, — do not weep thus bitterly: — look up to your excellent mother; learn to imitate, not only her tender affection, but her conſtancy in ſuffering; that cœleſtial view which

now brightens her countenance, ſhould animate you all. — My EMILY, — dry up your tears, my own ſweet girl. — Will you not take comfort from your mother's example? — will you not rejoice with her, that your father is going to be happier, than even *ſhe*, and *you*, and the reſt of my good children could make him? — If it pleaſe GOD to enable you to preſerve your innocence, you will not think death terrible, do you think you ſhall?

EMILIA.

O MY father — might it but pleaſe heaven that I ſhould even now accompany you — I ſhould be bleſt indeed!

SOPHRONIUS.

AY, ſo indeed you would: but will not my good girl be content to receive GOD's bleſſings, and free bounties, in his own manner, and at his own time? Will you not be ready to do his will, from whom you expect ſo glorious a reward?

— And

——And you, my ſons, let me not ſee you grieve as men without hope. My SEBASTIAN has already half run the race that I have now finiſhed — how ſhort a ſpace will the remainder ſeem, when you have paſſed over it! the path before your appears ſmooth and pleaſant; think only of performing your courſe with alacrity.

WITH what confidence can you, my good THEOPHILUS, preach patience and ſubmiſſion to your flock, if you do not ſhew that you are capable of exerting them, on trial, yourſelf?

IT is not the contemplation of death ſimply, that ſhocks my dear LIONEL; he of all men ſhould be moſt familiar to the thoughts of it.

I MEAN not to reproach you all for your tenderneſs on this occaſion; I ſhould have been grieved not to have ſeen you moved: I mean only to rouſe your dejected ſpirits, and remind your reaſon to gather up the reins.

URANIA.

We obey you! — See, we dry our tears — Gracious God, support my resolution!

EMILIA.

Dearest Sir — I would — but cannot — cannot — Dear Madam — forgive me —

URANIA.

Alas, my child! — I am — as weak as you —

SOPHRONIUS.

Come, my own Urania, and my dear good children, let me endeavour to divert your thoughts from the poor dying mortal, to the rational Being that will live for ever: let me claim your attention for a few minutes, and fix it on my immortal mind; — that is on *myself*; — for this worthless *body* will shortly have no more relation to *me*, than the bed I lie on: — but methinks I shall still be related

related to *you*: — I can hardly conceive that the bonds which tye me to you can ever be diſſolved. Methinks it would add to my happineſs in heaven, to be able to aſſiſt you here in your progreſs thro' life: but whether I ſhall have that indulgence or no, is not of importance, ſince GOD himſelf is your guide, and protector: — he is omni-preſent, and all-ſufficient: — he wants not the aſſiſtance of miniſterial agents, though perhaps he may employ them, as an exerciſe of their virtue, and a great ingredient of their happineſs. —— O how my ſoul exults, in the thought of having the ſphere of my beneficence for ever enlarged; — in being one of the honoured delegates of the Almighty to communicate happineſs to my fellow-creatures: — perhaps, as my own ſtation riſes from one degree of perfection to another, to be permitted to paſs from world to world, through the boundleſs regions of ſpace; to obſerve, and underſtand the texture, contrivance, and

furniture of the different planets of innumerable ſyſtems; and how an infinite diverſity of circumſtances may be accommodated by omnipotent wiſdom to the uſes of intelligent agents; and to ſee, to know, to admire and adore the infinite power and goodneſs, in the various moral tracks by which the creatures are conducted to their final felicity.——

But it is time to deſcend from theſe heights, and attend to the buſineſs I have ſtill to do, in this narrow ſphere.

URANIA.

Ah me! the charm is broke which ſuſpended my ſad feelings—I wake again to——

SOPHRONIUS.

Give me your attention, dear delights of my life, whilſt I addreſs a few words to each, which poſſibly may be of ſome uſe, when I have left you.

URANIA.

Oh dreadful sounds!——but——we attend.

SOPHRONIUS.

I only beg leave to remind you, my excellent Urania, that you ought not to yield to an extravagant regret, that you are left behind me in this imperfect state. — I know, on recollection, you will feel yourself ready and desirous to accomplish the whole will of our most gracious creator; and to submit, with chearful obedience, to the remainder of the duties he has thought proper to exact from you:— And when you consider of what important use you may be to our dear children, —especially my Emily;——to your adopted children in the parish;—to your poor neighbours;——nay to *all* your neighbours;—to a circle, the extent of which you can hardly conceive, that may be influenced by the example of your life, you will even wish to have the time of this ministration prolonged:—suppose

it

it of the utmoſt length it can naturally be, — what is the ſpace,

When cut from out Eternity's vaſt round?

It is a mere nothing! — and who could with reluctance offer this mite, in gratitude for the inestimable benefits promiſed by our moſt gracious maſter, to thoſe who love him; and are zealous to ſerve him in his own preſcribed way? — What can appear inſufferable to you, my URANIA, who know that in a little time you will be eaſed of every burthen, and totally exempted from pain and ſorrow, — thoſe badges of human weakneſs and imperfection, — for ever, and ever: — that yet a little while, and you will be permitted to follow your faithful SOPHRONIUS to the manſions of eternal felicity.

URANIA.

AMEN! — O merciful God — Amen!

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS

(*addreſſing himſelf to the eldeſt ſon.*)

And now what have I to ſay to my deareſt ſon? will he pardon me if I ſtill pretend to teach him, who is at leaſt as able to inſtruct me? but the words of dying men are ſuppoſed to be worth attention, becauſe the mind muſt then be more free from prejudice, and every ſecret human bias, than ever it was before.

SEBASTIAN.

Sure never was ſo candid, ſo right a mind, as that of my dear father! — the more bitter is my loſs — of ſuch a friend!

SOPHRONIUS.

Think me not loſt, my ſon; ——think me only retired at a little diſtance from you: — how ſmall the diſtance may be, God only knows!

SEBASTIAN.

His holy will be done!

SOPHRO-

SOPHRONIUS.

UPON reviewing my own life, I find it has been such as the men of buſineſs would call idle; and yet I do not think I have much to reproach myſelf with in that reſpect. I believe your turn of mind, my ſon, and your natural inclinations, are not unlike my own; and therefore what I ſpeak of myſelf, may be applicable to you.

WHEN *my* father went the way which yours is now ready to go, I quitted the profeſſion of the law, into which he had introduced me, becauſe I perceived in myſelf neither inclination nor genius for it; and I found it was not neceſſary to me, as my fortune was then enough to ſatisfy all wants but thoſe of pride and vanity;—which are never to be ſatisfied:—and therefore I thought it would be unreaſonable in itſelf, and unjuſt to others who had their fortunes to make, for me to enter the liſts of induſtry, where the

rewards

rewards of labour would be neceſſary to them, but ſuperfluous to me: this reaſoning is ſtill ſtronger when applied to you, who will be more amply provided for.

But what then was to be my part in life? was I like a mute to ſerve only to fill the ſcene? — or was I to be not only uſeleſs, but even troubleſome on the ſtage? — I own I had no ſuch mean opinion of my ſtation. I conceived that mankind was endowed with an infinite variety of propenſities and talents, to ſerve the different ends of ſociety; and that a virtuous man could not fail of being a uſeful member of it. I ſaw many ways in which I might contribute to the public weal; but in the courſe of my life, a thouſand opportunities have offered of ſerving my fellow-creatures, which I could not then foreſee; my duty was, not to neglect theſe opportunities, but even ſtudiouſly to ſeek them; to employ the extraordinary leiſure I enjoyed,

in

in furniſhing myſelf with uſeful knowledge, which might be beneficially communicated to, or applied for the ſervice of thoſe who could not, themſelves, attain it: as a ſteward of the great houſehold, to be ready to diſburſe ſome of the property in my hands, on all neceſſary occaſions: in fine, — to aſſiſt, inſtruct, improve, and even reprove, all who ſhould ſtand in need of it: — to be a father to the fatherleſs; — and if I could not plead the cauſe, — at leaſt, to ſtand the friend of the widow; and all who were deſtitute of their natural protectors: —— to uſe the influence, and power, which independent affluence muſt in ſome meaſure acquire, in the encouragement of honeſt induſtry; and the diſcountenancing idleneſs, and every kind of vice. I need not enter into a minute detail; you will eaſily recollect many incidents of my life which may become uſeful hints for your future conduct.

SEBASTIAN.

O THAT I may be enabled to follow the admirable example of my honoured father!

SOPHRONIUS.

I DOUBT not you will improve upon my plan of living. You have already paſſed the moſt dangerous ſeaſon of life; and with the foundation of principles, good ſenſe, and experience which is now ſettled in your mind, together with the advantage of your excellent mother's advice, — an advantage, you know how to value, — I doubt not you will exceed my fondeſt hopes.

BUT, when it pleaſed GOD to bleſs me with the ſociety of my deareſt URANIA, and with a race of well-diſpoſed children, a new, moſt important, and pleaſing occupation was offered to me; and I reſolved to give it the attention it deſerved.

How many careful hours have your dear mother and I ſpent in planning the

propereſt

proper art methods for your several educations! — for every child, in some circumstances at least, requires a diversity of management. We observed and commented on every little action and look of your earliest infancy; and by that minute attention, were enabled to form conjectures of your future characters, which we have found but little occasion to correct. It is surprizing how early, and how strongly, the character of the temper is marked; the nicest regulation of which, is of the utmost importance, both to the happiness of the individual, and a multitude of people who may have connections with him. How many persons of excellent principles in general, and many admirable qualities, become insupportable to their families, — that is to those on whom they must depend for the principal comforts of life, — by the neglect of their parents, and teachers, first, and their own inattention afterwards, to this essential

essential article of moral conduct, [illegible] human happiness.

I am persuaded that infancy is the proper, if not the only time for rigid chastisement, where there is any thing generous in the disposition of the pupil; hard words and blows are wretched expedients by which to govern reasonable creatures; but they are necessary and effectual methods of establishing command upon irrational minds. I suppose you can none of you remember any instances of corporal punishment from me; and yet such you have had, some of you with great severity: nor could you now acknowledge yourselves, in the true representations I could make, of your original tempers and characters.

That which is the duty of parents and tutors to the infant, becomes his own duty, the grand business of his life, when he is ripened into a rational creature: it is the task assigned him in this probationary state, to cultivate the noble

faculties, and virtuous diſpoſitions, with which his nature is endowed; and to reſiſt thoſe propenſities which rebel againſt reaſon: the laſt is our ſtate of warfare; and, in this reſpect, we are compared to ſoldiers in an enemy's country, who muſt be continually on their guard, and ready to ſnatch up their arms on the leaſt alarm; the other may be likened to the works of peace, not leſs neceſſary, and only leſs *violently* laborious.

UPON obſerving the early fruits of a careful management of my own children, I reflected how great a benefit it would be to my poor neighbours, to aſſiſt them in the education of their's: the time and attention of the labouring part of mankind are too much engaged in providing for the neceſſities of the body, to be able to do much towards the cultivation of the mind: I therefore thought of a ſcheme, which I imagined would prove a moſt uſeful charity, and at the ſame time be fruitful of many real advantages

to myself. —— It appeared to me that a private education, under the parents eye, —— with certain circumstances, which however can but rarely concur, —— was preferable to public schools: an affluent fortune, some abilities, and great attention in the parents, and such a number of pupils, either in the family, or collected to it, as may produce the very useful effects of emulation, are essentially necessary: I flattered myself with some prospect of success, in all these particulars, and I thank God I have not been disappointed.

I SPARED no time or pains in seeking for a proper tutor; and, as far as my circumstances could admit, I proportioned his rewards to the services I expected from him: I made him my companion and friend; and the respect with which I treated him, inspired every one else with a still greater degree of it. I then invited some of my poor tenants to partake of the advantages I expected

from my plan; and I dedicated a room in my own house to this purpose, where you may remember to have sometimes seen fifteen or twenty of your little innocent neighbours; who in that room, you know, were exactly upon the same footing with yourselves. The learned languages would have been of no service to my little farmers, and therefore at the hours set apart for that study, they were employed at home in their rural occupations; but writing, reading, arithmetic, some knowlege in mechanics, and physics, could not fail of being useful to them; and these served to open their minds, and free them from the old narrow prejudices, which have been so great an obstruction to all sorts of improvement: this was one main intention of my original scheme, and has, alone, amply secured to this charity its own reward; for my neighbours have for many years had great reason to envy me my tenants; who have

readily entered into all my experiments in husbandry, because they understood my meaning; could themselves discern the probability of the effects I expected from them; and could dextrously apply their hands, and their instruments, to any new purpose; and therefore were as little inclined to despair of the event, as to despise the attempt. Every instance of extraordinary ingenuity, or diligence, has been always sure of meeting with a reward; this excites their emulation, enlivens their labours, conciliates their affections, and returns back to myself with great increase.

You know that I am Lord Chief Justice, or rather Lord Chancellor, throughout all my estate; by which means I have it in my power to save my tenants from many expences, to compose their animosities, remove their jealousies, and promote their friendships: here every one is ready to assist his neighbour in distress; self-love, envy, and malice, are less pre-

valent in this parish, than in many other places, because religion and morality are better underſtood; for the firſt of all the duties of your preceptor, was to teach you religion as rationally as poſſible; to explain the foundation, connection, and uſe of morality; and in what manner virtue conduces to happineſs; to recommend to your affections, as well as your underſtandings, that firſt of all virtues, chriſtian charity, or ſocial love; the very bond of peace, the very eſſence of human happineſs.

WHAT I did for the male, your good mother did for the female part of the neighbourhood; we have ever gone hand in hand in virtue, and been a mutual ſupport and aſſiſtance to each other: happy is the man who gets one of her pupils for a wife! the advantage is well known in the country, and neither beauty nor fortune are ſo great a recommendation.

THUS,

THUS, by conferring real, great, and laſting benefits, at no great expence, and, I may ſay, with no trouble, — for the time and pains they have coſt us, ought rather to be conſidered as dedicated to amuſement, and pleaſure, ——— we have procured infinite good will, the richeſt of all payments: our tenants and our neighbours are our guards, and our friends; they heartily wiſh to promote our intereſts, becauſe they feel their own connected with them; — ſo far from envying, they rejoice in our proſperity, becauſe they know they ſhall be partakers of it.

THUS, my ſons, I have endeavoured to give you a general view of my principles and practice; and is it not a pleaſing proſpect?

SEBASTIAN.

OH, Sir, moſt delightful! and all of your own making.

SOPHRONIUS.

SUCH a one you may all of you in ſome degree raiſe round you: you, my SEBASTIAN, I doubt not will enrich the preſent ſcene; your father will not be miſſed in the country; even his memory will ſoon be loſt in the attention and conſideration you will attract.

SEBASTIAN.

IF any ſort of excellence ſhall be obſerved in me, it will ſerve only to remind the world of my admirable father, to whom, under GOD, I owe my all.

SOPHRONIUS.

MY THEOPHILUS too, will have the nobleſt opportunities of doing good, and gaining love: a worthy clergyman is the greateſt bleſſing to a pariſh; the benefits he may confer are infinite; and the children's children of the preſent generation may have reaſon to bleſs his memory.

Does

Does not *this* proſpect charm you? — does it not warm you?

THEOPHILUS.

INDEED, dear Sir, it does; and will, I hope, inſpire me with a zeal that may in ſome meaſure ſupply what is wanting in my abilities.

SOPHRONIUS.

YES, you will ſcorn to content yourſelf with barely eſcaping cenſure, with coldly performing the unavoidable parts of your function, like a poor mechanic for a paltry hire; — you will, I truſt, be warm, active, and vigilant in the diſcharge of your duty: the other profeſſions envy, though at the ſame time they reproach yours, for its idleneſs; — if the buſineſs of it were thoroughly performed, they would have little reaſon for either: the man who ſeriouſly conſiders he has ſo many immortal ſouls — a precious, tremendous charge — to preſerve from

misery, and conduct to eternal felicity, will not find himself exempt from much anxiety and labour; he will meet with continual trials of his humanity, his humility, his equanimity, and fortitude, and every christian virtue; will see that it behoves him, above all men, to be perpetually on his guard, to be attentive to every word and action, lest he give offence, lessen the respect that is due and necessary to his character; induce reflections on the whole body of the ministry, and hurt the cause of virtue and religion. Nor will this superior excellence want the encouragement of superior rewards; for, the respect, esteem, and affection of their fellow-creatures, constitute a great part of the felicity of reasonable beings; and I have always observed that a clergyman with good sense, good nature, competent knowledge, uniform morality, and sincere regard for his religion, received more of these from all sorts of people, than any other gentle-

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man with the ſame circumſtances. But tho' the miniſtry, from the nature of its functions, and the probable ſuperiority in knowledge and virtue, of its members collectively, is the firſt of all the profeſſions, let not my ſon harbour ſo illiberal a thought, as to deſpiſe or ridicule the reſt; they are all uſeful and neceſſary to ſociety; can all boaſt of men who are the glory of their ſpecies, and muſt all ſuffer the diſgrace of ſome unworthy members. Your brother, my only abſent child, will, I doubt not, deſerve and enjoy the reſpect of all men, by the rectitude of his conduct, and, very probably, he may one day claim it by the dignity of his ſtation; for merit has no where a fairer chance for riſing into eminence, than in the law. Our religion is the gracious gift of GOD, but the law is the nobleſt work of man; and no profeſſion affords a larger ſphere for beneficence than this. How many individuals, how many whole families, receive

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the moſt extenſive benefits from the able and the honeſt lawyer. How greatly is the community ſerved by the learned and the upright Judge! Let not abuſes be objected to the wiſdom of inſtitutions; defects muſt neceſſarily appear, and abuſes ariſe in every work of ſuch imperfect creatures as men: but let us always judge candidly and charitably, not only of individuals, but of collective bodies of men, weighing every circumſtance, motive, and temptation, and we ſhall not be ſo prompt to cenſure and contemn. My poor boy here will be confounded, by the haſty and malignant, with the many triflers that ſurround him; but I think he will, in time, diſtinguiſh himſelf greatly from his giddy companions; and the merit of a ſoldier, though it is not ſo conſtantly conſpicuous, yet when great occaſions call it forth, is perhaps of all other the moſt univerſally acknowledged, and the moſt ſtrenuouſly applauded. And who is more amiable than

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the modeſt, rational, moral ſoldier? Whatever may be the vices incident to the profeſſion, good humour, good breeding, openneſs of heart, and generoſity of mind are its characteriſtic virtues. A ſoldier can hardly avoid being, by habit, obedient to governors, reſpectful to ſuperiors, eaſy, frank, and friendly to equals, attentive and conſiderate to inferiors, though firm and inexorable in the exaction of their reſpective duties: — would they all, like you, my ſon, employ the great leiſure they enjoy, in acquiring ſuch a ſhare of ingenuous learning as every gentleman ought to poſſeſs, and particularly all branches of knowledge peculiarly neceſſary to their proper buſineſs — would they be convinced that religion is an eſſential part of the buſineſs of every rational creature, — in ſhort, — would they endeavour to be wiſe, as well as gallant men, — to be good chriſtians, as well as loyal ſubjects, how deſervedly would they be reſpected

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by all mankind!—But alas, my EMILY! it is neceſſary to inform you, that you muſt not judge of officers in general, by your brother; ſince it is too often ſeen, that the men who moſt value themſelves upon their dignity as gentlemen, who, above all men, affect the character of *men of honour*, hold it not *diſhonourable* to betray the innocent, to *diſhonour* the perſon they profeſs to love, to introduce miſery and infamy into worthy families, frequently the families of their friends, and benefactors; — to violate all the laws of generoſity, hoſpitality, fidelity, and even common honeſty, when they interfere with the gratification of their brutal paſſions; — or what is ſtill more infamous, their vanity.

O MY LIONEL — how do theſe things appear to you now? — now, be aſſured, they appear to you truly. —— May the recollection of this awful ſcene, — may the words of your dying father, — may

the preſent reflections, and convictions of your own mind, ruſh upon it again, in the dangerous hour of jollity and inconſideration: — When the example of the weak and wicked, the ſophiſtry of vice, the fervor of youth, the complaiſance of ſociety, and the licentiouſneſs of gaiety, ſhall all conſpire to repreſent the rigid rules of virtue as unnatural, and unjuſt, the impoſitions of men, and the tyranny of prieſts, then — then, may this ſolemn ſcene ruſh again upon your mind, and damp the riſing flame before it grows too ſtrong for oppoſition! — for when once this method of reaſoning is tolerated, the gates are ſoon thrown open, and every ſpecies of intemperance, and immorality, pours in like a torrent; — regularity is then ridiculed, decency affronted, property invaded, and the civil polity inſulted! — all which muſt ſurely be avenged! — and the diſſipated fortune, the diſtempered body, and the tormented conſcience, will prove experimentally

mentally — too late! will prove — that the laws of virtue are the regimens of health, the regulations of prudence, and the requiſites of happineſs.

And oh, my Emily! be ſure remember — that it is impoſſible for a virtuous woman to be happy in the ſociety of a vicious man: fire and water may as ſoon agree, as a modeſt and religious mind unite itſelf, with eaſe and ſatisfaction, to one that is debauched and unprincipled. Thou, my ſweet girl, art all purity and innocence, and if it pleaſe God to grant the aſſiſtance of thy excellent mother for a few years longer, to watch over the inadvertence of youth, and reſtrain the exceſs of even virtuous affections, thou wilt ever avoid the approaches of impurity: remember ſhe is your firſt and beſt friend, therefore let her ever be the confidant of all the ſecrets of your heart; let not a falſe ſhame hinder you from opening your boſom to her; but the more averſe you feel to diſcloſe your

diſtreſs,

diſtreſs, conclude it the more abſolutely neceſſary to be done; and be aſſured you will afterwards find reaſon to rejoice that you did it.

Love is the rock by which my poor girl will be liable to the greateſt dangers; it is a paſſion which perhaps is moſt incident to the moſt amiable minds; but, though implanted in our nature for important ends, to which it conducts us by delightful means, like all other paſſions, if not ſubjected to the controul of reaſon, it may lead into the moſt diſtreſsful ſituations, and be the occaſion of the ſevereſt ſufferings.

I know that my Emily has a heart formed for love, and every other virtuous affection; and true love is productive of the moſt generous ſentiments; it refines, and ennobles the human mind, enriches, and exalts that moſt coeleſtial of all its virtues, benevolence; — it is the moſt delightful circumſtance of human nature; — the balm of life; — and

the sweetest consolation in every distress: Think not I would fright my EMILIA from it; — no, I would conduct her safely to it. GOD grant that she may meet with a man whose heart is worthy to be united with hers! — why sobs my child? — why do I ask, when I think I know the complication of tender feelings that distress her heart! — my own URANIA too! — Alas! the same worthy sentiments now swell her bosom; with the additional, bitter reflection on that blissful union which is now going to be dissolved — bitter indeed it is, even to me, who believe that I shall quit that happy state which my soul has ever acknowledged with unutterable gratitude, for another still more happy! — Surely we shall meet again — never more to endure this suffering — surely we shall shortly meet again, to contribute to each other's felicity, in an uninterrupted society, through all eternity! — let me break off with that reflection. —— I feel myself exhausted,

and must still submit to the imperfection of my mortal part.

LEAVE me, my URANIA, my dearest children — we shall meet again, even in this world; — but it must be to part: — and let us endeavour to compose our minds, that we may part with the decency, and dignity of immortal beings, who separate only for a short time, in humble confidence of meeting again in the mansions of eternal happiness.

SOPHRONIUS now dismissed his desolate family, but in about an hour summoned them again around him.

TREMBLING, they approached him, when they observed an animation in his eyes, and pleasure expressed so strongly in every line of his countenance, that their hearts revived; they could not help flattering themselves, that some happy change had restored to them the tenderest husband, the fondest father, the gentlest

and the wiſeſt friend that ever family was bleſt with; when he ſaid,

FAREWEL, my beſt beloved all — I am going — let me not ſay to die; — I am going to begin to live: it is not preſumptuous in me to ſay ſo; my GOD, my moſt beneficent Creator has vouchſafed to give me an undoubting conſciouſneſs that I am going to be moſt happy — I *am* moſt happy! — I no longer feel that I am about to leave you, no more than I did when I uſed to wiſh you a good night, and beg a bleſſing on you. — Hours, days, months, and years are done away in my mind — I have entered on eternity — I can never want time again, and there is no time in which I ſhall not be happy. O my URANIA — O my children, we are all equals now — Huſband and father are human relations — we ſhall be all equal friends: — eternal friendſhip — undoubting eſteem — cordial kindneſs — cœleſtial love — Oh, glorious! — Come, my deareſt

friends — oh haſten to join me — look not a thought on any other object — purſue your way earneſtly, and ſteadily, and you will ſoon arrive happily to the end of your journey; — to the end of all your labours, — to the beginning of life — to the bleſt ſociety of immortal ſpirits. —— Farewel! — Praiſe GOD! — O praiſe the divine Eſſence of goodneſs! —— I come — my father, and my GOD ——

HE ſaid no more; but with eyes raiſed towards Heaven, a glow upon his cheeks, and a lively alacrity in every feature, his bleſſed ſoul flew out to its Creator.

FINIS.

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